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**Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan**

**for**

**State/Territory ALABAMA**

**FFY 2019–2021**

This Plan describes the Child Care and Development Fund program to be administered by the State or Territory for the period from 10/1/2018 to 9/30/2021, as provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations. The Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including amending the options selected or described.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

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## Introduction and How to Approach Plan Development

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program provides resources to state, territory, and tribal grantees that enable low-income parents to work or pursue education and training so that they can better support their families while at the same time promoting the learning and development of their children. The CCDF program also provides funding to enhance the quality of child care for all children. On November 19, 2014, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 was signed into law (Pub. L. 113-186). The law reauthorizes and significantly revises the purposes of the CCDF program and requirements for state and territory grantees. In September 2016, the final rule was released. The final rule makes regulatory changes to the CCDF program based on the CCDBG Act of 2014. These changes strengthen requirements to protect the health and safety of children in child care; help parents make informed consumer choices and access information to support child development; provide equal access to stable, child care for low-income children; and enhance the quality of child care and the early childhood workforce.

The Plan is the primary mechanism that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) uses to determine state and territory compliance with the requirements of the law and rule. The Preprint provides a tool for states and territories to describe to ACF their progress on the following sections:

1. Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination With Relevant Systems
2. Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education
3. Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families
4. Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Families
5. Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes To Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings
6. Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce
7. Support Continuous Quality Improvement
8. Ensure Grantee Accountability

These organizational categories reflect key functions of an integrated system of child care for low-income working families. Although the Plan is divided into sections for reporting and accountability purposes, ACF encourages Lead Agencies to approach the Plan in a cross-cutting, integrated manner. The intention is that grantees and the federal government will be able to use this information to track and assess progress, determine the need for technical assistance (TA), and determine compliance with specific requirements and deadlines.

### *CCDF Plan Submission*

States and territories will submit their Plans electronically through the ACF-118 electronic submission site. The ACF-118 site will include all language and questions included in the final CCDF Plan Preprint template approved by the Office of Management and Budget. Please note that the format of the questions on the ACF-118 site could be modified from the Word version of the document to ensure compliance with Section 508 policies regarding accessibility to electronic and information technology for individuals with disabilities. (See <http://www.section508.gov/> for more information.)

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In responding to questions, states and territories are asked to provide brief, specific summaries and/or bullet points only with specific language that responds to the question. Do not use tables or copy and paste charts, add attachments, or paste manuals into the Plan. All information and materials developed to support CCDF implementation and information reported in the CCDF Plan are subject to review by ACF as part of ongoing oversight and monitoring efforts.

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# 1 Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination With Relevant Systems

This section identifies the leadership for the CCDF program in each Lead Agency and the entities and individuals who will participate in the implementation of the program. It also identifies the stakeholders that were consulted to develop the Plan and who the Lead Agency collaborates with to implement services. In this section respondents are asked to identify how match and maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds are identified. Coordination with child care resource and referral (CCR&R) systems are explained, and Lead Agencies outline the work they have done on their disaster preparedness and response plans.

## 1.1 CCDF Leadership

The Governor of a state or territory must designate an agency (which may be an appropriate collaborative agency) or establish a joint interagency office to represent the state or territory as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto (658D; 658E(c)(1)).

### 1.1.1. Which Lead Agency is designated to administer the CCDF program?

Identify the Lead Agency or joint interagency office designated by the state or territory. ACF will send official grant correspondence, such as grant awards, grant adjustments, Plan approvals, and disallowance notifications, to the designated contact identified here (658D(a)).

#### a) Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Office Information:

Name of Lead Agency: **Alabama Department of Human Resources**

Street Address: **50 North Ripley Street**

City: **Montgomery**

State: **AL**

ZIP Code: **36130**

Web Address for Lead Agency: [www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov)

#### b) Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Official Contact Information:

Lead Agency Official First Name: **Nancy**

Lead Agency Official Last Name: **Buckner**

Title: **Commissioner**

Phone Number: **(334)242-1162**

Email Address: [nancy.buckner@dhr.alabama.gov](mailto:nancy.buckner@dhr.alabama.gov)

### 1.1.2 Who is the CCDF Administrator?

Identify the CCDF Administrator designated by the Lead Agency, the day-to-day contact, or the person with responsibility for administering the state's or territory's CCDF program. ACF will send programmatic communications, such as program announcements, program instructions, and data collection instructions, to the designated contact identified here. If there is more than

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one designated contact with equal or shared responsibility for administering the CCDF program, please identify the Co-Administrator or the person with administrative responsibilities and include his or her contact information.

a) CCDF Administrator Contact Information:

CCDF Administrator First Name: **Jeanetta**

CCDF Administrator Last Name: **Green**

Title of the CCDF Administrator: **Division Director**

Address for the CCDF Administrator (if different from the Lead Agency):

**Address same as Lead Agency Address**

Street Address:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

Phone Number: **334-242-1425**

Email Address: [Jeanetta.green@dhr.alabama.gov](mailto:Jeanetta.green@dhr.alabama.gov)

b) CCDF Co-Administrator Contact Information (if applicable): **Not Applicable**

CCDF Co-Administrator First Name:

CCDF Co-Administrator Last Name:

Title of the CCDF Co-Administrator:

Address of the CCDF Co-Administrator (if different from the Lead Agency):

Street Address:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Description of the role of the Co-Administrator:

## 1.2 CCDF Policy Decision Authority

The Lead Agency has broad authority to administer (i.e., establish rules) and operate (i.e., implement activities) the CCDF program through other governmental, non-governmental, or public or private local agencies as long as it retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program (658D(b)). Administrative and implementation responsibilities undertaken by agencies other than the Lead Agency must be governed by written agreements that specify the

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mutual roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency and other agencies in meeting the program requirements.

1.2.1 Which of the following CCDF program rules and policies are administered (i.e., set or established) at the state or territory level or local level? Identify whether CCDF program rules and policies are established by the state or territory (even if operated locally) or whether the CCDF policies or rules are established by local entities, such as counties or workforce boards (98.16(i)(3)). Check one.

- ☒ All program rules and policies are set or established at the state or territory level.
- ☐ Some or all program rules and policies are set or established by local entities. If checked, indicate which entities establish the following policies. Check all that apply.
  - 1. Eligibility rules and policies (e.g., income limits) are set by the:
    - ☐ State or territory
    - ☐ Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set.
    - ☐ Other. Describe: .
  - 2. Sliding-fee scale is set by the:
    - ☐ State or territory
    - ☐ Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set.
    - ☐ Other. Describe: .
  - 3. Payment rates are set by the:
    - ☐ State or territory
    - ☐ Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set.
    - ☐ Other. Describe: .
  - 4. Other. List other program rules and policies and describe (e.g., quality rating and improvement systems [QRIS], payment practices):

1.2.2 How is the CCDF program operated? In other words, which entity(ies) implement or perform these CCDF services? Check all that apply.

a) Who conducts eligibility determinations?

- ☐ CCDF Lead Agency
- ☐ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agency
- ☐ Other state or territory agency
- ☐ Local government agencies, such as county welfare or social services departments
- ☐ Child care resource and referral agencies

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☒ Community-based organizations

**Eligibility is determined by regional Child Care Management Agencies (CMAs). The CMAs are local community-based non-profit agencies. There are three Child Care Management Agencies operating in 9 regions. The three agencies are: Child Care Management of North Central Alabama, Family Guidance Center of Alabama, Talladega Clay Randolph Child Care Corporation. The agencies and the counties served are listed at [www.dhr.alabama.gov/counties/daycare\\_agency.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/counties/daycare_agency.aspx).**

☐ Other.

b) Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?

☒ CCDF Lead Agency –

**The Lead agency maintains a database of legally operating child care programs and information on choosing child care. The lead agency maintains a toll free number where consumers can call to obtain information on the licensing status, substantiated complaints and referrals to other services.**

☒ TANF agency

☐ Other state or territory agency

☐ Local government agencies, such as county welfare or social services departments

☐ Child care resource and referral agencies

☒ Community-based organizations- **Regional Child Care Management Agencies (CMAs) and regional Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs) assist parents with locating child care.**

☐ Other.

c) Who issues payments?

☐ CCDF Lead Agency

☐ TANF agency.

☐ Other state or territory agency.

☐ Local government agencies, such as county welfare or social services departments.

☐ Child care resource and referral agencies.

☐ Community-based organizations.

☒ Other:

**The lead agency contracts with Conduent State and Local Solutions to issue payments through direct deposit to the child care provider's bank account.**

1.2.3 What processes will the Lead Agency use to monitor administrative and implementation responsibilities performed by agencies other than the Lead Agency as indicated above, such as through written agreements or monitoring and auditing processes (98.11(a)(3))? Describe those processes and any indicators or measures used to assess performance.

**Quarterly reports that collect data and review program performance is required of all Quality Enhancement Agencies. The Child Care Management Agencies (CMAs) undergo a yearly Improper Payment Review to monitor policy application and child care awards and payments.**

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**Technical assistance and on-site visits are provided to both the QEAs and CMAs to monitor contract compliance**

1.2.4 Lead Agencies must assure that, to the extent practicable and appropriate, any code or software for child care information systems or information technology for which a Lead Agency or other agency expends CCDF funds to develop must be made available on request to other public agencies, including public agencies in other States, for their use in administering child care or related programs (98.15(a)(11)). Assure by describing how the Lead Agency makes child care information systems available to public agencies in other states to the extent practicable and appropriate.

**The lead agencies' Information and Technology Division oversees systems the systems where the lead agency is owner of the code and software. Requests forwarded to the Lead Agency Information Technology Division for response.**

1.2.5 Lead Agencies must have in effect policies to govern the use and disclosure of confidential and personally-identifiable information about children and families receiving CCDF assistance and child care providers receiving CCDF funds (98.15(b)(13)). Certify by describing the Lead Agency's policies related to the use and disclosure of confidential and personally-identifiable information. The use of the SSN is no longer a requirement.

**The use and disclosure of confidential information is described in the Lead Agency's policies and procedures for the Child Care Subsidy Program and in contracts with vendors implementing services on behalf of the lead agency. Policies dictate that all records are confidential and are not subject to public use or inspection. Only the appropriate staff is to have access to case records, and such access is restricted to the appropriate staff functioning in their official capacities. "Appropriate staff" means, exclusively, staff directly involved in administering services, for, or on behalf of, a parent and does not include staff in general. The use of social security numbers is voluntary and benefits are not denied or withheld for failure of the parent to provide a social security number. Pseudo numbers are used in place of the SSN when not supplied by the client. The eligibility system will automatically generate a unique identifier in lieu of a social security number.**

### **1.3 Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan**

The Lead Agency is responsible for developing the CCDF plan, which serves as the application for a 3-year implementation period. As part of the Plan development process, Lead Agencies must consult with the following:

(1) Appropriate representatives of units of general purpose local government—(658D(b)(2); 98.10(c); 98.12(b); 98.14(b)). General purpose local governments are defined by the U.S. Census at [https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/govts/20120301\\_cspan\\_govts\\_def\\_3.pdf](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/govts/20120301_cspan_govts_def_3.pdf).

(2) The State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act) (658E(c)(2)(R); 98.15(b)(1)) or similar coordinating body pursuant to 98.14(a)(1)(vii).

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(3) Indian tribe(s) or tribal organization(s) within the state. This consultation should be done in a timely manner and at the option of the Indian tribe(s) or tribal organization(s) (658D(b)(1)(E)).

*Consultation* involves meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the state or territory CCDF Plan. Describe the partners engaged to provide services under the CCDF program in question 1.4.1.

1.3.1 Describe the Lead Agency's consultation in the development of the CCDF plan.

- a) Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with appropriate representatives of general purpose local governments.

**Input on the State Plan was requested from local government agencies. A letter was sent to the League of Municipalities and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama requesting input on the CCDF Plan from their membership.**

- b) Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the State Advisory Council.

**Input on the State Plan was requested from the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. This agency houses the work of the State Advisory Council through the Children's Policy Council. The Department of Early Childhood Education is represented on the lead agency's Child Care Coordinating Committee. The Committee is charged with advising the department on child care issues and making recommendations for ongoing services. The lead agency met with the committee on April 19 to receive input from member agencies on the provisions of the CCDF Plan.**

- c) Describe, if applicable, how the Lead Agency consulted with Indian tribes(s) or tribal organizations(s) within the state.

**The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is the federally recognized tribal organization in the state. A copy of the draft plan and request for review was sent to the organization. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is represented on the lead agency's Child Care Coordinating Committee. The Committee is charged with advising the department on child care issues and making recommendations for ongoing services. The lead agency met with the committee on April 19 to receive input from member agencies on the provisions of the CCDF Plan.**

- d) Describe any other entities, agencies, or organizations consulted on the development of the CCDF plan.

**Input was requested from the following state agencies and advocacy agencies; Alabama State Department of Education; Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services; Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Alabama Department of Public Health; Alabama Department of Medicaid; the Alabama Association for Early Care and Education (AAECE); Alabama Head Start Association; Alabama Head Start Collaboration Office; VOICES for Alabama's Children; Alabama Partnership for Children; representative of Quality Enhancement agencies who provide local resource and referral services; Alabama Fire Marshall's Office; Alabama Alliance of YMCAs; Association of County Directors of DHR; and the Alabama Family Child Care Association. These agencies are represented on the lead agency's Child Care Coordinating Committee. The Committee is charged with advising the department on child care issues and making recommendations for ongoing**

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**services. The lead agency met with the committee on April 19 to receive input from member agencies on the provisions of the CCDF Plan.**

1.3.2 Describe the statewide or territory-wide public hearing process held to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan (658D(b)(1)(C); 98.16(f)). *Reminder:* Lead Agencies are required to hold at least one public hearing in the state or territory, with sufficient statewide or territory-wide distribution of notice prior to such a hearing to enable the public to comment on the provision of child care services under the CCDF Plan. At a minimum, this description must include:

- a) Date(s) of notice of a public hearing. **May 9, 2018.** *Reminder:* Must be at least 20 calendar days prior to the date of the public hearing.
- b) How was the public notified about the public hearing, including how notice was accessible for people with disabilities? Please include specific website links if used to provide notice.

**Notice of the hearing was advertised in Alabama's eight largest newspapers. The notice advised of the date and location of the public hearing. To reinforce the notification process, notice of the public hearing was sent to the Lead Agency's 67 county offices, Child Care Management Agencies, and Quality Enhancement Agencies to facilitate broad access by the public. These agencies gave notice of the hearing through communication with parents and providers. Letters were sent to statewide provider associations within the state. Email notification and the draft plan were sent to members of Lead Agency workgroups and advisory groups, including the Child Care Coordinating Committee, the the EHS-CCP Governance Committee and the EHS-CCP Policy Council. Members of these workgroups and advisory groups were asked for their input on the document and to share the document with their constituents. Notice of the date and location of the public hearing was posted on the lead agency website at [http://dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Care\\_Services\\_Division.aspx](http://dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Care_Services_Division.aspx).**

- c) Date(s) of the public hearing(s). **May 30, 2018** *Reminder:* Must be no earlier than January 1, 2018, which is 9 months prior to the October 1, 2018, effective date of the Plan.
- d) Hearing site(s) or method(s), including how geographic regions of the state or territory were addressed.

**Gordon Person Building Auditorium, 50 N Ripley Street, Montgomery, AL. Montgomery, the state capital, is centrally located to allow for those who wanted to participate in person to do so without significant travel. The notice advises that written comments could be accepted by mail, email and fax and the contact information was provided in the notice**

- e) How the content of the Plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s).

**Notice of the plan was given to child care center provider associations across the state. Individual notice was written to each child care center provider association president to encourage participation by the membership. The hearing notice included an email address ([childcare.susbsidy@dhr.alabama.gov](mailto:childcare.susbsidy@dhr.alabama.gov)) to accommodate comments from providers, parents and others who could not attend the public hearing. The public hearing notice was included on the Lead Agency website. A copy of the draft Plan is placed on the Lead**

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**Agency website is available at CMA offices, and available at County Department offices. The Lead Agency website allows for the site and documents on the site to translate to multiple languages.**

- f) How was the information provided by the public taken into consideration regarding the provision of child care services under this Plan?

**Public comment will be considered in understanding potential gaps in services, ways to collaborate with existing resources within the state to expand services, and exploring ways that the new services may be implemented in the future to meet the needs of families and to provide access to high quality care within the guidelines of state and federal regulations and funding priorities.**

1.3.3 Lead Agencies are required to make the submitted and final Plan, any Plan amendments, and any approved requests for temporary relief (i.e., waivers) publicly available on a website (98.14(d)).

- a) Provide the website link to where the plan, any plan amendments, and/or waivers are available.

[www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Care](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Care)

- b) Describe any other strategies that the Lead Agency uses to make the CCDF Plan and Plan amendments available to the public (98.14(d)). Check all that apply and describe the strategies below, including any relevant website links as examples.

☒ Working with advisory committees. Describe:

**A draft copy of the plan was made available to lead agency work groups and advisory groups including the Child Care Coordinating Committee; the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Policy Council; and the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Governance Committee.**

☒ Working with child care resource and referral agencies. Describe:

**A draft copy of the document was provided to community-based agencies with whom the lead agencies contracts to provide resource and referral, consumer education and eligibility determinations. These agencies have local offices throughout the state.**

☒ Providing translation in other languages. Describe:

**The draft document was placed on the Lead agency website. The website has the capability to translate documents in a variety of languages.**

☐ Sharing through social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, email). Describe:

☒ Providing notification to stakeholders (e.g., provider groups, parent groups). Describe:

**A draft document was provided to various stakeholders, advocate groups, provider associations and collaborative agencies: including VOICES for Alabama's Children; Alabama Association for Early Care and Education (AAECE); Alabama Association for Young Children (AAYC); Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Parent**

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as Teachers; HIPPY (Home Instructions for Parents of Preschool Youngsters); Child Care Alliance, and Alabama Family Child Care Association.

☐ Other. Describe:  

#### 1.4 Coordination with Partners To Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care

Lead Agencies are required to describe how the state or territory will efficiently, and to the extent practicable, coordinate child care services supported by CCDF with programs operating at the federal, state/territory, and local levels for children in the programs listed below. This includes programs for the benefit of Indian children, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care (98.14(a)(1)).

1.4.1 Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates the provision of child care services with the following programs to expand accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services that meet the needs of working families (658E(c)(2)(O); 98.12(a); 98.14(a)).

This list includes entities required by law or rule, along with a list of optional partners that Lead Agencies potentially would coordinate with over the next 3 years to expand accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services.

Include in the descriptions the goals of this coordination, such as extending the day or year of services for families; smoothing transitions for children between programs or as they age into school; enhancing and aligning the quality of services; linking comprehensive services to children in child care settings; or developing the supply of quality care for vulnerable populations. Check who you will coordinate with and describe all that apply.

☒ (REQUIRED) Appropriate representatives of the general purpose local government, which can include counties, municipalities, or townships/towns. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The lead agency has met with local Economic Development Agencies about creating access to child care and particular child care during non-traditional hours. Economic Development agencies are experiencing shortages of available care for employees working non-traditional hours. The lead agency coordinates with local municipalities and cities to identify local government expenditures on child care that can be certified as CCDF match. This identification of expenditures assists the lead agency in meeting the match requirement to access all available federal funding.**

☒ (REQUIRED) State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (or similar coordinating body) (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act). Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE) houses the work of the State Advisory Council through the Children's Policy Council and the Head Start Collaboration Office. The lead agency provides services to extend the day for children in Pre-K and Head**

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**Start programs. The lead agency collaborates with the DECE to implement practiced based coaching in the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership program and is collaborating to bring Infant/Toddler track and stipends for infant/toddler teachers to attend the Alabama Birth to Eight Conference.**

- ☐ Does the Lead Agency have official representation and a decision-making role in the State Advisory Council (or similar coordinating body)?

☐ No

☒ Yes

- ☒ (REQUIRED) Indian tribe(s) and/or tribal organization(s), at the option of individual tribes.

Describe the coordination goals and process, including which tribe(s) was consulted:

**The Tribal Organization in Alabama is the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. The Lead Agency makes training and professional development opportunities available to Tribal child care facilities and facilities serving Tribal families. All child care programs receive training calendars from the regional Quality Enhancement Agencies that serves their county. The regional Quality Enhancement Agencies also list training opportunities on their individual websites. The Poarch Creek Indians serves on the lead agency's Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) program Governing Committee.**

- ☐ N/A—There are no Indian tribes and/or tribal organizations in the State.

- ☒ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency(ies) responsible for programs for children with special needs, including early intervention programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part C for infants and toddlers and Section 619 for preschool). Describe the coordination goals and process:

**Early intervention supports and services focus on teaching parents and other caregivers ways to help the child learn and participate in everyday activities. Through partnerships with Alabama Department of Public Health, *Healthy Child Care Alabama* and United Cerebral Palsy, *Child Care Enhancement with a Purpose* initiative, referrals of children is made to Early Intervention and child care programs are better able to integrate adaptive concepts for children with disabilities into the program structure.**

- ☒ (REQUIRED) State/territory office/director for Head Start state collaboration. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The Head Start State Collaboration office is housed within the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. The State Collaboration Director serves on various committees for the CCDF lead agency including the Child Care Coordination Committee and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Governing Committee. The coordination has led to shared services between Head Start, child care and pre-k such as coaching training, the cross sector use of curriculum and assessment tools, specialized Alabama Quality STARS orientation sessions for Head Start providers, training, and technical assistance. Coordination with the Head Start**

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**State Collaboration office helps the lead agency coordinate the implementation of child care initiatives that impact Head Start and child care providers such as Alabama Quality STARS-QRIS and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership.**

☒ (REQUIRED) State agency responsible for public health, including the agency responsible for immunizations. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The lead agency coordinates with the Department of Public Health. The agency coordination provides statewide support to child care programs serving all age groups of children. The programs identify and make referrals of infants and toddlers to the Alabama Early Intervention System and child care programs to integrate adaptive concepts for children with disabilities into the program structure. The Department of Public Health through the Healthy Child Care Alabama initiative provides**

☒ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for public education, including prekindergarten (preK). Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The Lead Agency coordinates with the Alabama Department of Education to provide quality extended-day services for school age children through grants awarded to Local Education Agencies. Funds target rural areas and low-performing school sites. The goal of this program and agency coordination is to integrate strategies that enhance the quality of care in extended-day child care settings and increase the availability of quality out of school programs.**

☒ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for child care licensing. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The Lead Agency is the also the state agency responsible for child care licensing. The coordination between licensing and CCDF agency helps streamline the identification of eligible providers and reduces the amount of additional documentation requested from providers. The Office of Child Care Licensing conducts all Healthy and Safety monitoring viists for CCDF providers.**

☒ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and other relevant nutrition programs. Describe the coordination goals and process:  
**The lead agency shares information on the legal operating status of child care programs with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). CACFP is notified when a new program opens or a program closes. The Lead Agency shares with CACFP information on licensed program suspensions and revocations. The lead agency receives information from CACFP on program that are not in compliance with CACFP requirements. The lead agency and CACFP is in the planning process of initiating a memorandum of understanding that will allow for electronic data sharing of relevant information on child careprograms in the state.**

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☒ (REQUIRED) McKinney-Vento state coordinators for homeless education and other agencies providing services for children experiencing homelessness and, to the extent practicable, local McKinney-Vento liaisons. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) houses the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator for Homeless Education. The coordination with ALSDE McKinney-Vento State Coordinator has led to training on Subsidy Program eligibility and services for city and county homeless liaisons and training for Child Care Management Agencies and Quality Enhancement Agencies on the The coordination assisted in the development of priority eligibility policy for homeless families. The State McKinney-Vento State coordinator is a member of the Child Care Coordinating Committee. The Child Care Coordinating Committee makes recommendations to the lead agency on the array of child care services offered by the lead agency.**

☒ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for employment services and workforce development. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The lead agency has met with local Economic Development Agencies about creating access to child care and particular child care during non-traditional hours. Economic Development agencies are experiencing shortages of available care for employees working non-traditional hours.**

☒ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The Lead Agency is also the state agency for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) services. CCDF services coordinate with the TANF unit to provide priority for care for children of families participating in the TANF JOBS (Job Opportunity and Basic Skills) program. Services are offered through a referral system thereby reducing the need for families to attend multiple interviews to assess eligibility. The goal is to provide priority access to child care for families participating in the program to enable the recipients to engage in work and/or training activities.**

☒ (REQUIRED) Agency responsible for Medicaid and the state Children's Health Insurance Program. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**Input was requested from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH). ADPH is a member of the Lead Agency Child Care Coordinating Committee and provides input to the lead agency on CCDF policy throughout year. The Lead Agency partners with the ADPH to implement Healthy Child Care Alabama, providing nurse health consultant services and health and safety training to child care providers.**

☒ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for mental health. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The CCDF lead agency serves on the State advisory committee for Project LAUNCH led by the Alabama Department of Mental Health through a grant from the Substance Abuse and**

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**Mental Health Services Administration. Project LAUNCH promotes the wellness of young children from birth to eight years by addressing physical, social, emotional, cognitive and behavior aspects of their development. Through this coordination technical assistance, training, and mentoring is provided to implement screening and assessment tools and appropriate referrals in the child care settings. Through this coordination agencies are working to align the screening and assessments tools used in early care and education settings.**

☒ (REQUIRED) Child care resource and referral agencies, child care consumer education organizations, and providers of early childhood education training and professional development. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The CCDF Lead Agency contracts with nonprofit community based agencies to administer Subsidy Program eligibility services and quality enhancement services. The Lead Agency's relationship with these local agencies has allowed for expansion of resources in the child care arena and allowed for blending of local, private and public funding to support child care initiatives.**

☒ (REQUIRED) Statewide afterschool network or other coordinating entity for out-of-school time care (if applicable). Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The Lead agency is a member of the statewide afterschool network association and has contracted services with Truman Pierce Institute of Auburn University to provide training and quality standards for after-school programs. The Lead agency also coordinates services with Alabama Department of Education providing grants to selected afterschool programs for activities to increase quality in those programs.**

☒ (REQUIRED) Agency responsible for emergency management and response. Describe the coordination goals and process:

**The Lead agency is coordinating with State and Local Emergency Management Agencies through the Agency's designated liaison to assist in the development of the Emergency Prepared Plan and to provide and receive critical information during emergency situations.**

*The following are examples of optional partners a state might coordinate with to provide services. Check all that apply.*

☒ State/territory/local agencies with Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grants. Describe:  
**The Lead Agency is the state grantee for the Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships. The CCDF program is aligning eligibility policies with EHS-CCP to better meet the needs and streamline the eligibility process for family's eligible and receiving services through both programs.**

☒ State/territory institutions for higher education, including community colleges. Describe:

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The Lead Agency coordinates with Alabama Community College System two-year colleges to provide scholarships for child care providers to obtain a credential, certificate, Associate and/or Bachelor degree through the T.E.A.C.H and Leadership in Child Care Scholarship (LICC) Programs. Through collaborative efforts of the Lead Agency, Quality Enhancement Agency and Community Colleges a child care resource library is housed at three community colleges. The library is partially staffed by Child Development and Early Care and Education students at the college.

☐ Other federal, state, local, and/or private agencies providing early childhood and school-age/youth-serving developmental services. Describe:

☒ State/territory agency responsible for implementing the Maternal and Child Home Visitation programs grant. Describe:

**The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education is the agency responsible for the Maternal and Childhood Home Visitation program. The lead agency serves on the advisory board of the Alabama First Teacher Home Visitation program.**

☐ Agency responsible for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment. Describe:

☒ State/territory agency responsible for child welfare. Describe:

**The Lead Agency is also the State agency for Child Welfare services. Program coordinated allows for Protective Service and Foster Care families to receive priority for child care services. Child Welfare staff provides training in child abuse and neglect detection and prevention to child care providers.**

☐ State/territory liaison for military child care programs. Describe:

☒ Provider groups or associations. Describe:

**Provider groups and associations are active members on the Lead Agency's Child Care Coordinating Committee and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program Governing Committee. The ongoing coordination provide knowledge of Lead Agency policy related to child care issue, allows ongoing input from the provider community into the provision of CCDF funded services and provides awareness and training on new child care initiatives implemented by the Lead Agency that can be shared with the associations at-large membership.**

☐ Parent groups or organizations. Describe:

☐ Other. Describe:

## **1.5 Optional Use of Combined Funds, CCDF Matching and Maintenance-of-Effort Funds**

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*Optional Use of Combined Funds:* States and territories have the option to combine funding for CCDF child care services with funding for any of the required programs listed in 1.4.1. These programs include those operating at the federal, state, and local levels for children in preschool programs, tribal early childhood programs, and other early childhood programs, including those serving infants and toddlers with disabilities, homeless children, and children in foster care (658E(c)(2)(O)(ii)). Combining funds could include blending multiple funding streams, pooling funds, or layering funds together from multiple funding streams to expand and/or enhance services for children and families to allow for the delivery of comprehensive quality care that meets the needs of children and families. For example, state/territory agencies may use multiple funding sources to offer grants or contracts to programs to deliver services; a state/territory may allow a county/local government to use coordinated funding streams; or policies may be in place that allow local programs to layer CCDF funds with additional funding sources to pay for full-day, full-year child care that meets Early Head Start/Head Start or state/territory prekindergarten requirements in addition to state/territory child care licensing requirements.

As a reminder, CCDF funds may be used in collaborative efforts with Head Start programs to provide comprehensive child care and development services for children who are eligible for both programs. In fact, the coordination and collaboration between the Head Start and CCDF is strongly encouraged by sections 640(g)(1)(D) and (E); 640(h); 641(d)(2)(H)(v); and 642(e)(3) of the Head Start Act in the provision of full working day, full calendar year comprehensive services. To implement such collaborative programs, which share, for example, space, equipment, or materials, grantees may layer several funding streams so that seamless services are provided (Policy and Program Guidance for the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships: [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/acf\\_im\\_ohs\\_15\\_03.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/acf_im_ohs_15_03.pdf)).

1.5.1 Does the Lead Agency choose to combine funding for CCDF services for any required early childhood program (98.14(a)(3))?

☐ No.

☒ Yes. If yes, describe at a minimum:

a) How you define “combine”

**The agency defines “combine” as the layering of funding from different streams to allow for the delivery of comprehensive, high quality child care services.**

b) Which funds you will combine

**The Lead Agency is combining CCDF and Early Head Start Funds through the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership.**

c) Your purpose and expected outcomes for combining funds, such as extending the day or year of services available (i.e., full-day, full-year programming for working families), smoothing transitions for children, enhancing and aligning quality of services, linking comprehensive services to children in child care or developing the supply of child care for vulnerable populations

**The purpose is to increase the level of quality for infants/toddlers in partnering child care centers and child care homes to ensure that comprehensive services are being**

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**provided to enrolled families. The goal is that child care programs will increase the level of quality provided to all children in Early Head Start and non-Early Head Start families.**

- d) How you will be combining multiple sets of funding, such as at the State/Territory level, local level, program level?

**Funding is allocated at the State Level. The Lead Agency is the CCDF lead agency and the grantee for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program.**

- e) How are the funds tracked and method of oversight

**The funds are tracked through the Lead Agency finance division and monitoring is conducted by state level program specialists. The Department of Human Resources (DHR), the Lead Agency creates a contract and budget for each program partner agency. Contractual agreements are reviewed by Legal and Financial Accounting staff. Invoices for expenditures are submitted monthly and reviewed by a program specialist against budgets, verifying the number of children served and line item detail accuracy. The Program Specialist assigned the correct financial reporting code based on the type of expenditure. Invoices are submitted to the DHR Finance Division for additional review against budgets, contracts and financial reporting codes before payment is authorized. Incorrect invoices are returned for correction. Correct invoices are submitted to the State Comptroller office where additional audit and review is conducted. Monthly reports of expenditures are created from the accounting system general ledger to show total costs and program expenditures allocated to each program area and reporting code.**

*Use of PreK for Maintenance of Effort:* The CCDF final rule clarifies that public preK funds may also serve as maintenance-of-effort funds as long as the state/territory can describe how it will coordinate preK and child care services to expand the availability of child care while using public preK funds as no more than 20 percent of the state's or territory's maintenance of effort or 30 percent of its matching funds in a single fiscal year (FY) (98.55(h)). If expenditures for preK services are used to meet the maintenance-of-effort requirement, the state/territory must certify that it has not reduced its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services (98.55(h)(1); 98.15(a)(6)).

*Use of Private Funds for Match or Maintenance of Effort:* Donated funds do not need to be under the administrative control of the Lead Agency to qualify as an expenditure for federal match. However, Lead Agencies do need to identify and designate in the state/territory Plan the donated funds given to public or private entities to implement the child care program (98.55(f)).

1.5.2 Which of the following funds does the Lead Agency intend to use to meet the CCDF matching and MOE requirements described in 98.55(e) and 98.55(h)? Check all that apply.

*Note:* The Lead Agency must check at least public and/or private funds as matching, even if preK funds also will be used.

☐ N/A—The territory is not required to meet CCDF matching and MOE requirements

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☒ Public funds are used to meet the CCDF matching fund requirement. Public funds may include any general revenue funds, county or other local public funds, state/territory-specific funds (tobacco tax, lottery), or any other public funds.

- If checked, identify the source of funds:

**State of Alabama funds**

- If known, identify the estimated amount of public funds that the Lead Agency will receive: \$

**Estimate amount is not known at this time.**

☐ Private donated funds are used to meet the CCDF matching funds requirement. Only private funds received by the designated entities or by the Lead Agency may be counted for match purposes (98.53(f)).

If checked, are those funds:

- ☐ donated directly to the State?
- ☐ donated to a separate entity(ies) designated to receive private donated funds?

If checked, identify the name, address, contact, and type of entities designated to receive private donated funds:

If known, identify the estimated amount of private donated funds that the Lead Agency will receive: \$

☒ State expenditures for preK programs are used to meet the CCDF matching funds requirement. If checked, provide the estimated percentage of the matching fund requirement that will be met with preK expenditures (not to exceed 30 percent):

**Estimated percentage of matching fund requirement is 30%.**

If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the matching fund requirement, describe how the State will coordinate its preK and child care services:

**The CCDF Lead Agency makes professional development training initiatives, including scholarships, available to Pre-K staff. The Lead Agency provides wrap-around care during the school year and full-day services during school breaks and holidays for children in State Pre-K sites, LEA Pre-K sites and Head Start Pre-K sites when these sites do not offer full-day services.**

**The lead agency and the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE), the state pre-K agency, conduct training opportunities that can be accessed by staff in all child care sectors.**

**The lead agency and DECE have interagency agreements to coordinate on several projects including implementation and training on Creative Curriculum for EHS-CCP sites, teaching strategies assessment; and Practiced-based coaching for EHS-CCP staff and plans are to expand to non-Head Start sites.**

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- If known, identify the estimated amount of preK funds that the Lead Agency will receive for the matching funds requirement:

**Estimated amount is \$3.5 Million**

Describe the Lead Agency efforts to ensure that preK programs meet the needs of working parents:

**Alabama's Department of Early Childhood Education Pre-K initiative operates more 938 classrooms with enrollment for approximately 16,884 four-year-olds. The initiative, , uses a variety of strategies aimed at serving families and children, including collaborating with other entities to provide services in various provider settings including Head Start, public schools, private child care centers, faith-based centers, community based centers, and Colleges/Universities, thus more effectively meeting the needs of working families within these communities.**

**The Lead Agency provides wrap-around care during the school year and full-day services during school breaks and holidays for children in State Pre-K sites, LEA Pre-K sites and Head Start Pre-K sites when these sites do not offer full-day services. This allows for full-day services to meet the needs of working families.**

☒ State expenditures for preK programs are used to meet the CCDF maintenance-of-effort requirements. If checked,

The Lead Agency assures that its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services has not been reduced, pursuant to 98.55(h)(1) and 98.15(6).

☐ No

☒ Yes

Describe the Lead Agency efforts to ensure that preK programs meet the needs of working parents:

**Alabama's Department of Early Childhood Education Pre-K initiative operates more 938 classrooms with enrollment for approximately 16,884 four-year-olds. The initiative, , uses a variety of strategies aimed at serving families and children, including collaborating with other entities to provide services in various provider settings including Head Start, public schools, private child care centers, faith-based centers, community based centers, and Colleges/Universities, thus more effectively meeting the needs of working families within these communities.**

**The Lead Agency provides wrap-around care during the school year and full-day services during school breaks and holidays for children in State Pre-K sites, LEA Pre-K sites and Head Start Pre-K sites when these sites do not offer full-day services. This allows for full-day services to meet the needs of working families.**

Estimated percentage of the MOE Fund requirement that will be met with preK expenditures (not to exceed 20 percent):

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**Estimated percentage of MOE fund requirement that will be met with Pre-K expenditures is 20%.**

- If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the MOE requirement, describe how the State will coordinate its preK and child care services to expand the availability of child care:

**The CCDF Lead Agency makes professional development training initiatives, including scholarships, available to Pre-K staff. The Lead Agency provides wrap-around care during the school year and full-day services during school breaks and holidays for children in State Pre-K sites, LEA Pre-K sites and Head Start Pre-K sites when these sites do not offer full-day services.**

**The lead agency and the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE), the state pre-K agency, conduct training opportunities that can be accessed by staff in all child care sectors.**

**The lead agency and DECE have interagency agreements to coordinate on several projects including implementation and training on Creative Curriculum for EHS-CCP sites, teaching strategies assessment; and Practiced-based coaching for EHS-CCP staff and plans are to expand to non-Head Start sites.**

- If known, identify the estimated amount of preK funds that the Lead Agency will receive for the MOE Fund requirement:

**Estimated amount is \$1.3 Million**

## **1.6 Public-Private Partnerships**

Lead Agencies are required to describe how they encourage public-private partnerships among other public agencies, tribal organizations, private entities, faith-based organizations, businesses or organizations that promote business involvement, and/or community-based organizations to leverage existing service delivery (i.e., cooperative agreement among providers to pool resources to pay for shared fixed costs and operation) (658E(c)(2)(P)). ACF expects these types of partnerships to leverage public and private resources to further the goals of the CCDBG Act. Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate how they encourage public-private partnerships to leverage existing child care and early education service-delivery systems and to increase the supply and quality of child care services for children younger than age 13, for example, by implementing voluntary shared service alliance models (98.14(a)(4)).

**1.6.1** Identify and describe the entities with which and the levels at which the state/territory is partnering (level—state/territory, county/local, and/or programs), the goals of the partnerships, the ways that partnerships are expected to leverage existing service-delivery systems, the method of partnering, and examples of activities that have resulted from these partnerships (98.16(d)(2)).

**The Lead Agency collaborates with the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC), a private nonprofit agency, to fund the TEACH Early Childhood Program. This program, along with the**

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**Lead Agency's relationship with community colleges, has allowed for increased training and educational opportunities for providers. An ongoing relationship with the Child Care Resource Center, Employer's Child Care Alliance promotes an increase in the number of corporate partners that support quality initiatives in child care. Many of the local agencies funded by the Lead Agency to implement Quality initiatives are developing private partnerships to supplement funding for quality activities and to maintain sustainability of quality services. Partnerships have been formed by local agencies with private partners such as W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Neumors, PNC Bank and United Way.**

## **1.7 Coordination with Local or Regional Child Care Resource and Referral Systems**

Lead Agencies may use CCDF funds to establish or support a system of local or regional child care resource and referral (CCR&R) organizations that is coordinated, to the extent determined by the state/territory, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based or regionally based, lead child care resource and referral organization (such as a statewide CCR&R network) (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii); 98.52).

- If Lead Agencies use CCDF funds for local CCR&R organizations, the local or regional CCR&R organizations supported by those funds must, at the direction of the Lead Agency, provide parents in the State with consumer education information concerning the full range of child care options (including faith-based and community-based child care providers), analyzed by provider, including child care provided during non-traditional hours and through emergency child care centers, in their area.
- To the extent practicable, work directly with families who receive assistance to offer the families support and assistance to make an informed decision about which child care providers they will use to ensure that the families are enrolling their children in the most appropriate child care setting that suits their needs and one that is of high quality (as determined by the Lead Agency).
- Collect data and provide information on the coordination of services and supports, including services under Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- Collect data and provide information on the supply of and demand for child care services in areas of the state and submit the information to the State;
- Work to establish partnerships with public agencies and private entities, including faith-based and community-based child care providers, to increase the supply and quality of child care services in the state and, as appropriate, coordinate their activities with the activities of the state Lead Agency and local agencies that administer funds made available through CCDF (98.52(b)).

Nothing in the statute or rule prohibits States from using CCR&R agencies to conduct or provide additional services beyond those required by statute or rule.

*Note:* Use section 7.6 to address how quality set-aside funds, if applicable, are used to support a statewide CCR&R system.

1.7.1 Does the Lead Agency fund a system of local or regional CCR&R organizations?

☐ No. The state/territory does not fund a CCR&R system and has no plans to establish one.

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☒ Yes. The state/territory funds a CCR&R system. If yes, describe the following:

a) What services are provided through the CCR&R system?

**Alabama contracts with community-based regional Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs) to maximize the quality services offered by child care providers for children, families in Alabama. QEAs services include:**

- **Training and technical assistance to child care providers utilizing resource libraries, provider networks, mentoring, on-site training, and distance learning.**
- **Professional development activities to assist child care providers in surpassing state minimum licensing standard, obtaining credentials, certificates or degrees and to encourage providers to operate their programs consistent with effective management skills and business practices.**
- **Consumer education to inform the public about quality child care and assist families in making informed child care choices.**
- **Recruitment and training for diverse child care populations**

b) How the CCR&R system is operated, including how many agencies and if there is a statewide network and how the system is coordinated.

**Each of the QEAs are responsible for maintaining current trends in child development and makes access available through their website, community and statewide events, and the QEAs location. There are seven comprehensive regional quality enhancement agencies operating in nine regions. Regional agencies provide services to all categories of providers within the region and on all quality topics.**

**There are eleven targeted quality enhancement agencies. Targeted agencies provide training and technical assistance to a specific category of providers (such as family child care providers) or on a specific topic.**

## **1.8 Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan**

Lead Agencies are required to establish a Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan (658E(c)(2)(U)). They must demonstrate how they will address the needs of children—including the need for safe child care, before, during, and after a state of emergency declared by the Governor or a major disaster or emergency (as defined by Section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5122)—through a Statewide Disaster Plan that, for a State, is developed in collaboration with the State human services agency, the State emergency management agency, the State licensing agency, the State health department or public health department, local and State child care resource and referral agencies, and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (designated or established pursuant to section 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)(1)(A)(i))) or similar coordinating body (98.16(aa)).

1.8.1 Describe how the Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan was developed in collaboration with the State human services agency, the State emergency management agency, the State licensing agency, the State health department or public health department, local and State child

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care resource and referral agencies, and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body:

**The Lead Agency has prepared an Emergency Welfare Services Disaster Response Plan. Licensing minimum standards require that all licensed facilities have a plan for the evacuation and care of children in the case of fire, tornado, serious accident or injury, or power failure. The plan must be posted in a conspicuous place in the facility.**

**The lead agency is creating a collaboration committee, which includes the required agencies to formulate the details of a statewide disaster plan for child care.**

1.8.2 Describe how the Statewide Disaster Plan includes the Lead Agency's guidelines for the continuation of child care subsidies and child care services, which may include the provision of emergency and temporary child care services during a disaster and temporary operating standards for child care after a disaster:

**Eligible families will be given flexibility to extend eligibility past 12 months without recertification and allow for flexible application procedures. Current policy allows for the extension of benefits for up to 90 days as a result of loss of job or training whether a permanent or non-permanent loss of employment/training. Homeless provisions currently in place will be applicable to families seeking shelter as a result of the impact of a disaster in disaster declaration area.**

1.8.3 Describe Lead Agency procedures for the coordination of post-disaster recovery of child care services:

**The Lead Agency's Emergency Welfare Services Disaster Response Plan includes procedures for the coordination of post-disaster recovery.**

1.8.4 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that providers who receive CCDF funds have the following procedures in place—evacuation; relocation; shelter-in-place; lockdown; communications with and reunification of families; continuity of operations; and accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions:

**Licensing minimum standards require that all licensed facilities have a plan for the evacuation and care of children in the case of fire, tornado, serious accident or injury, or power failure. The plan must be posted in a conspicuous place in the facility. All programs participating in the child care Subsidy Program must adhere to these guidelines as part of compliance with Health and Safety Guidelines.**

1.8.5 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that providers who receive CCDF funds have the following procedures in place for child care staff and volunteers—emergency preparedness training and practice drills as required in 98.41(a)(1)(vii):

**The Lead Agency monitors compliance during licensing annual and renewal visits for all licensed providers. Compliance is monitoring for all CCDF eligible providers during the annual CCDF Health and Safety visit.**

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1.8.6 Provide the link to the website where the statewide child care disaster plan is available:

**The plan is not available on the website. The Lead Agency's Emergency Welfare Services Disaster Response Plan can be obtained by contacting the Child Care Services Division toll free at 866-528-1694.**

## **2 Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education**

Lead Agencies are required to support the role of parents as child care consumers who need information to make informed choices regarding the services that best suit their needs. A key purpose of the CCDBG Act is to "promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings" (658A(b)). Lead Agencies have the opportunity to consider how information can be provided to parents through the child care assistance system, partner agencies, and child care consumer education websites.

The target audience for the consumer education information includes three groups: parents receiving CCDF assistance, the general public, and when appropriate, child care providers. In this section, Lead Agencies will address how information is made available to families to assist them in accessing high-quality child care and how information is shared on other financial assistance programs or supports for which a family might be eligible. In addition, Lead Agencies will certify that information on developmental screenings is provided and will describe how research and best practices concerning children's development, including their social-emotional development, is shared.

In this section, Lead Agencies will delineate the consumer and provider education information related to child care, as well as other services, including developmental screenings, that is made available to parents, providers, and the general public and the ways that it is made available. This section also covers the parental complaint process and the consumer education website that has been developed by the Lead Agency and the manner in which it links to the national website and hotline. Finally, this section addresses the consumer statement that is provided to parents supported with CCDF funds.

### **2.1 Outreach to Families With Limited English Proficiency and Persons With Disabilities**

The Lead Agency is required to describe how it provides outreach and services to eligible families with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities and to facilitate the participation of child care providers with limited English proficiency and disabilities in the CCDF program (98.16(dd)). Lead Agencies are required to develop policies and procedures to clearly communicate program information, such as requirements, consumer education information, and eligibility information, to families and child care providers of all backgrounds (81 FR 67456).

#### **2.1.1 Describe how the Lead Agency or partners provide outreach and services to eligible families for whom English is not their first language:**

**The lead agency provides applications in other languages as well as informational material in non-English languages. The lead agency's website is also available in non-English languages. Local community-based locations are available to accept applications and assist non-English**

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**language families. The lead agency has the ability to have translation/interpretation in all primary and secondary languages. A Language line service is available for all eligibility agencies to assist in the translation for eligible families with limited English proficiency.**

- 2.1.2 Describe how the Lead Agency or partners provide outreach and services to eligible families with a person(s) with a disability:

**All persons with a disability have the option to receive additional supports through the State Department of Human Resources, the local County Department of Human Resources, or the local Child Management Agency office. Each office maintains a list of service providers to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to all services offered by the lead agency.**

## **2.2 Parental Complaint Process**

The Lead Agency must certify that the state/territory maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request (658E(c)(2)(C); 98.15(b)(3)). Lead Agencies must also provide a detailed description of the hotline or similar reporting process for parents to submit complaints about child care providers; the process for substantiating complaints; the manner in which the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints; and ways that the Lead Agency makes information on such parental complaints available to the public on request (98.16; 98.32).

- 2.2.1 Describe the Lead Agency's hotline or similar reporting process through which parents can submit complaints about child care providers, including a link if it is a Web-based process:

Parents can contact the Lead Agency's toll-free intake line to report any complaints. The toll-free line is staffed Monday through Friday 8 am to 5pm. Parents may also report complaints via email to [childcare.licensing@dhr.alabama.gov](mailto:childcare.licensing@dhr.alabama.gov)

- 2.2.2 Describe the Lead Agency's process for screening, substantiating and responding to complaints regarding CCDF providers, including whether the process includes monitoring:

**All complaints are received and recorded by a licensing Child Care Consultant intake worker. All complaints are investigated by a Child Care Consultant by using an investigation form. The complaint is investigated for Minimum Standards violations for all licensed providers. For any other programs participating in subsidy, they are investigated for Health and Safety Guidelines violations.**

- 2.2.3 Describe the Lead Agency's process for screening, substantiating and responding to complaints for non-CCDF providers, including whether the process includes monitoring:

**All complaints are received and recorded by a Child Care Consultant intake worker. The complaint is investigated for Minimum Standards violations and is recorded on a complaint investigation form by a Child Care Consultant. For non-CCDF providers who are exempt from licensure, the complaint is recorded on an intake form by a Child Care Consultant. Licensed non-CCDF providers received an onsite monitoring visit to determine substantiation of the complaint. For exempt non-CCDF providers, the complaint is reported to the local District Attorney in the county where the facility is located.**

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2.2.4 Certify by describing how the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints:

**Each substantiated complaint is maintained in the facility's file. The complaint is also entered into the Child Care Management System (CCMS), the Lead Agency's computer system for maintaining licensing and provider data.**

2.2.5 Certify by describing how the Lead Agency makes information about substantiated parental complaints available to the public; this information can include the consumer education website discussed in section 2.3:

**Substantiated complaints are available to the public by contacting the Lead Agency's Child Care Intake Line (1-866-528-1694). Licensed facilities and all CCDF eligible providers are required to post the deficiency report in a conspicuous place within the day care facility. Also, substantiated complaints can be viewed online, by facility, on the Lead Agency's website at [http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/daycare/daycare\\_search.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/daycare/daycare_search.aspx)**

## **2.3 Consumer Education Website**

States and Territories are required to provide information to parents, the general public, and when applicable, child care providers through a State website, which is consumer-friendly and easily accessible (658E(c)(2)(E)(i)(III)). The website must include information to assist families in understanding the policies and procedures for licensing child care providers. The website information must also include provider-specific information, monitoring and inspection reports for the provider, the quality of each provider (if such information is available for the provider), and the availability of the provider (658E(c)(2)(D); 98.33(a)). The website should also provide access to a yearly statewide report on deaths, serious injuries, and the number of cases of substantiated child abuse that have occurred in child care settings. To assist families with any additional questions, the website should provide contact information for local child care resource and referral organizations and any other agencies that can assist families in better understanding the information on the website.

To certify, respond to questions 2.3.1 through 2.3.10 by describing how the Lead Agency meets these requirements and provide the link in 2.3.11. Please note that any changes made to the web links provided below in this section after the CCDF Plan is approved are considered substantial changes and CCDF Plan Amendments will be required.

2.3.1 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that its website is consumer-friendly and easily accessible:

**The website is easily locatable as it is the same website for other social services. All child care functions are located within the Child Care Services tab on the websites. Families have the ability to search for providers by county, zip code, and legal status type. Information on how to become a child care facility is also found on the site. Information on how to contact agencies for eligibility services is located on the website. Consumers can contact the eligibility agencies by clicking on their county of residence – contact information for the agency will be displayed including a link to send an email directly to the local agency.**

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- 2.3.2 Describe how the website ensures the widest possible access to services for families that speak languages other than English (98.33(a)):

**The website is accessible in multiple languages. All information on the website can be translated into different languages by clicking on the translation option at the bottom of the webpage.**

- 2.3.3 Describe how the website ensures the widest possible access to services for persons with disabilities:

**The website is easily readable, in plain language, and is navigatable with a minimum number of clicks. The website meets compliance with the America Disabilities Act (ADA) in ease of access.**

- 2.3.4 Lead Agency processes related to child care.

A required component of the consumer education website is a description of Lead Agency policies and procedures relating to child care (98.33(a) (1)). This information includes a description of how the state/territory licenses child care, a rationale for exempting providers from licensing requirements, the procedure for conducting monitoring and inspections of providers, and the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks.

- a) Provide the link to how the Lead Agency licenses child care providers, including the rationale for exempting certain providers from licensing requirements, as described in section 5.3.6:

[http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Care\\_Services/Licensing\\_Overview.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Care_Services/Licensing_Overview.aspx)

- b) Provide the link to the procedure for conducting monitoring and inspections of child care providers, as described in section 5.3.2:

**Monitoring and inspections of licensed child care providers is conducted by the Lead Agency's, Office of Child Care Licensing.**

**The following links describes all licensing procedures -**

[http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Care\\_Services/Licensing\\_Overview.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Care_Services/Licensing_Overview.aspx)

- c) Provide the link to the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks for staff members of child care providers and the offenses that prevent individuals from being employed by a child care provider or receiving CCDF funds, as described in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.6:

[http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/quicklinks/Criminal\\_History.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/quicklinks/Criminal_History.aspx)

- 2.3.5 List of providers

The consumer education website must include a list of all licensed providers and, at the discretion of the Lead Agency, all providers eligible to deliver CCDF services, identified as either licensed or license-exempt. Providers caring for children to whom they are related do not need to be included. The list of providers should be searchable by ZIP Code.

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- a) Provide the website link to the searchable list of child care providers:

[http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/daycare/daycare\\_search.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/daycare/daycare_search.aspx)

- b) Which providers are included in the searchable list of child care providers:

- ☒ Licensed CCDF providers
- ☒ Licensed non-CCDF providers
- ☒ License-exempt center-based CCDF providers
- ☐ License-exempt family child care (FCC) CCDF providers
- ☒ License-exempt non-CCDF providers
- ☐ Relative CCDF child care providers
- ☐ Other. Describe:

- c) Describe what information is available in the search results. Specify if the information is different for different types of providers:

**Information available includes facility and licensee name, licensing status, address with interactive map, telephone, director's name, hours of operation, ages accepted, accreditations, Alabama Quality STAR rating, Substantiated complaints, and adverse actions.**

**Licensed exempt non-CCDF providers do not have information on hours of operation, ages accepted, or accreditations. This information is not available to the agency for these providers. Licensed exempt, non-CCDF providers do not have information on substantiated complaints or adverse actions.**

**Faithbased Licensed exempt providers will not have an Alabama Quality STAR rating. Only licensed providers are eligible to participate in Alabama Quality STARS.**

2.3.6 Lead Agencies must also identify specific quality information on each child care provider for whom they have this information. The type of information provided is determined by the Lead Agency, and it should help families easily understand whether a provider offers services that meet Lead Agency-specific best practices and standards or a nationally recognized, research-based set of criteria. Provider-specific quality information must only be posted on the consumer website if it is available for the individual provider.

- a) How does the Lead Agency determine quality ratings or other quality information to include on the website?

- ☒ Quality rating and improvement system
- ☒ National accreditation
- ☐ Enhanced licensing system
- ☐ Meeting Head Start/Early Head Start requirements
- ☐ Meeting prekindergarten quality requirements
- ☐ Other. Describe:

- b) For what types of providers are quality ratings or other indicators of quality available?

- ☒ Licensed CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

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**Alabama Quality STARS, QRIS rating system awards a star at each level from one to five for child care centers.**

**National Accreditation is available.**

- ☒ Licensed non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

**Alabama Quality STARS, QRIS rating system awards a star at each level from one to five for child care centers.**

**National accreditation information is available for providers accredited by the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).**

- ☒ License-exempt center-based CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

**National Accreditation information is available for providers accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).**

- ☐ License-exempt FCC CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

- ☐ License-exempt non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

- ☐ Relative child care providers. Describe the quality information:

- ☐ Other. Describe:

2.3.7 Lead Agencies are required to post monitoring and inspection reports on the consumer education website for each licensed provider and for each non-relative provider eligible to provide CCDF services on the consumer education website. These reports must include results of required annual monitoring visits and visits due to major substantiated complaints about a provider's failure to comply with health and safety requirements and child care policies. The reports must be in plain language and be timely to ensure that the results of the reports are available and easily understood by parents when they are deciding on a child care provider. Lead Agencies must post at least 3 years of reports when available.

Certify by describing:

- a) How monitoring and inspection reports are in plain language. Include a website link to a sample monitoring report, or if reports are not in plain language, describe how plain-language summaries are used to meet the regulatory requirements. Include a link to a sample report and summary.

**The lead agency is working with the lead agency's Information Services Division to develop these capabilities, including document imaging of the reports. Documents will be available, by child care provider on the lead agency's website. Timeline for completion is September 30, 2018.**

- b) How monitoring and inspection reports and/or their plain-language summaries prominently display any health and safety violations, including any fatalities or serious injuries.

**The deficiency reports show a summary of all violations, are easily readable and understandable for public use.**

- c) The process for correcting inaccuracies in reports.

**Reports are reviewed for inaccuracies prior to them being uploaded for view. Any discrepancies found after which will be immediately corrected.**

- 
- d) The process for providers to appeal the findings in the reports, including the time requirements.

**An aggrieved person may request a fair hearing in the following situations: the application for initial license is denied; the application for renewal of a license is denied; the application for initial license or renewal of a license is not acted upon within reasonable promptness identified as 60 days of receipt of all information; and if a license is suspended or revoked.**

**CCDF providers may appeal the findings to terminate participation in the Child Care Subsidy program as a result of noncompliance findings in a Health and Safety monitoring visit. Providers must request the hearing within 60 days of the action to terminate participation.**

- e) How reports are posted in a timely manner. Specifically, provide the Lead Agency's definition of "timely" and describe how it ensures that reports are posted within its timeframe.

**Reports must be submitted and approved by a supervisor prior to it being uploaded for public review. Reports are to be posted within 10 days of approval of accuracy of the report.**

- f) How many years of reports that the state/territory posts on its website, if any, beyond the required minimum of 3 years, where available (98.33(a)(4)(iv)).

**The lead agency will post reports for three years plus the current fiscal year.**

- g) The policy for removing reports after a certain amount of time has passed (e.g., after 7 years).

**Reports are maintained for three years plus the current fiscal year. The system will automatically remove and archive reports that are beyond the required timeframe.**

- h) Any additional providers on which the Lead Agency chooses to include reports. Note - Licensed providers and CCDF providers must have monitoring and inspection reports posted on their consumer education website.

- ☐ License-exempt non-CCDF providers
- ☐ Relative child care providers
- ☐ Other. Describe:
- ☒ **None**

2.3.8 Aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of child abuse that have occurred in child care settings each year must be posted on the consumer education website. The information on serious injuries and deaths should be organized by category of care and licensing status, however, Lead Agencies are not required to breakdown the instances of substantiated child abuse by category of care and licensing status.

Certify by providing:

- 
- a) The designated entity to which child care providers must submit reports of any serious injuries or deaths of children occurring in child care (98.16 (ff)) and describe how the Lead Agency obtains the aggregate data from the entity.

**Alabama Department of Human Resources, Office of Child Care Licensing**

- b) The definition of “substantiated child abuse” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement.

**Under Alabama law, substantiated child abuse is "harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare which can occur through nonaccidental physical or mental injury; sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse; sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation."**

- c) The definition of “serious injury” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement.
- d) The website link to the page where the aggregate number of serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated instances of child abuse are posted.

**Aggregate data will be on the lead agency website at [www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov). The lead agency is developing the process for making this data available online.**

2.3.9 The consumer education website should include contact information on referrals to local child care resource and referral organizations. How does the Lead Agency provide referrals to local CCR&R agencies through the consumer education website? Describe and include a website link to this information:

**A list of Quality Enhancement Agencies is found on the lead agency website. Contact information and link to each agency is also on the website.**

**[http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Care\\_Services/CCQuality\\_Enhancement\\_Agcies.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Care_Services/CCQuality_Enhancement_Agcies.aspx)**

2.3.10 The consumer education website should include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency, or its designee, or other programs that can help the parent understand information included on the website. Describe and include a website link to this information:

The website will provide contact information for the lead agency, the Child Care Management Agencies, and the Quality Enhancement Agencies.

2.3.11 Provide the website link to the Lead Agency’s consumer education website.

**[http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Care\\_Services/Child\\_Care\\_Services\\_Division.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Care_Services/Child_Care_Services_Division.aspx)**

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## 2.4 National Website and Hotline

The CCDBG Act of 2014 required the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish a national website at ChildCare.gov, which includes a ZIP Code-based search of available child care providers, provider-specific information about the quality of care and health and safety compliance, referrals to local CCR&R organizations, and information about child care subsidy programs and other financial supports available to families (658L(b)). Lead Agencies must also provide a description of how they will respond to complaints submitted through the national website and hotline (98.16(hh)).

Describe how the Lead Agency responds to complaints submitted through the national website and hotline regarding both licensed and license-exempt child care providers.

**Child Care Licensing Intake Worker responds to complaints received by telephone and email daily on all child care facilities. The complaint is recorded in the Child Care Management System and assigned to a child care consultant for investigation when it involves a facility that is licensed or participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program. For an exempt from licensure facilities not participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program, effective March 21, 2018 with the passage of the Act #201-278 - the Child Care Safety Act, the Department will inspect any child care facility that is exempt from licensure at any time if it has reasonable cause to believe the facility is not in compliance with the section of the Act or the safety of a child is at risk.**

Identify the designee responsible for receiving and responding to complaints submitted through the national website and hotline.

**The Alabama Department of Human Resources, Child Care Services Division responds to complaints involving child care facilities.**

## 2.5 Additional Consumer and Provider Education

Lead Agencies are required to certify that they will collect and disseminate information about the full diversity of child care services to promote parental choice to parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers. In addition to the consumer education website, the consumer education information can be provided through CCR&R organizations or through direct conversations with eligibility case workers and child care providers. Outreach and counseling can also be effectively provided via information sessions or intake processes for families (658E(c)(2)(E); 98.15(b)(4); 98.33(b)).

In questions 2.5.1 through 2.5.4, certify by describing:

2.5.1 How the Lead Agency shares information with eligible parents, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers about the availability of child care services provided through CCDF and other programs for which the family may be eligible, such as state preK, as well as the availability of financial assistance to obtain child care services. At a minimum, describe what is provided (e.g., such methods as written materials, the website, and direct communications) and how information is tailored for these audiences.

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The Lead Agency contracts with Child Care Management Agencies to provide eligibility services. These agencies also inform parents of the application process. Local County Departments of Human Resources (that are an extension of the lead agency) inform parent of the availability of services. Community-based Quality Enhancement Agencies helps the lead agency with outreach by providing information on the availability of services to child care providers. Licensing inspectors share information on the availability of services to child care providers who in turn inform parents in their programs. The partnerships formed to make information about the availability of child care services available to families; Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Office of School Readiness State Pre-K, Head Start Collaboration Office, and the Alabama State Department of Education are partnerships that help inform parents about the availability of services.

2.5.2 How the Lead Agency provides the required information about the following programs and benefits to the parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, providers. In the description, include at a minimum what information is provided, how the information is provided, and how the information is tailored to a variety of audiences and include any partners who assist in providing this information.

☒ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program:

**The Lead Agency is also the state agency for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services. CCDF services are coordinated with the TANF unit and to provide priority care for children of families participating in the TANF JOBS (Job Opportunity and Basic Skills) program.**

**As a condition of the lead agency contract with regional Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEA) information is shared with providers so that providers can link families to other programs. Outreach includes community or parent newsletters and/or brochures provided in resource libraries. The QEA provides listing of local agency resources including the County Department of Human Resources which administers the TANF program locally. The lead agency includes the brochure "Putting it Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US" in licensing application packets. The brochure includes information on all lead agency services including the TANF program. Providers can share the information with families through their family resource area.**

☒ Head Start and Early Head Start programs:

**The Lead Agency is the grantee of the Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships. The CCDF program aligns eligibility with EHS-CCP to better meet the needs and stream line the eligibility process. The Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is designated as the lead agency for Head Start. The coordination between the Lead Agency and DECE brings existing early childhood services through shared training and technical assistance and aligning the use of curriculum and child assessment tools across all child care sectors.**

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As a condition of the lead agency contract with regional Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEA) information is shared with providers so that providers can link families to other programs. QEA conduct outreach through shared trainings opportunities, and community awareness programs. The lead agency Office of Licensing shares information through information mailed to providers with their licensing applications.

☒ **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):**

Information is shared by the Child Care Management Agency (CMAs) eligibility workers, Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs), and the Lead Agency Child Care Intake line. QEAs provide written information in resource areas and direct consultation is provided to parents and the public based on expressed need. CMAs, during the eligibility process, provide contact information for local agencies operating the LIHEAP program based on needs expressed by the parent. The United Way Agency maintains the 2-1-1 Connects Alabama referral system. 2-1-1 Connects Alabama is an easy number to remember and dial for information on health and human services organization in the community. In local areas without direct access to the LIHEAP agency, the CMA directs individuals to 2-1-1 Connect Alabama to obtain the information.

As a condition of the contract with Quality Enhancement Agencies information is shared with providers so that providers can link families to other programs. Outreach includes providing information on the 2-1-1 Connect Alabama referral system. 2-1-1 Connect Alabama is an easy number to dial for information on health and human services organizations. Community Action Agencies that administer the LIHEAP programs are included in the list of services. In training on family engagement QEAs inform providers of local resources that may be of interest to families.

☒ **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP) Program:**

The Lead Agency is also the state agency for the SNAP Program. Information is shared by the Child Care Management Agency (CMA) eligibility workers, Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs), the Lead Agency Child Care Intake line and website. The lead agency publishes the brochure "Putting it Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US". The brochure has a summary of information and eligibility criteria for the SNAP program and information on how to contact the agency.

QEAs maintain information about SNAP services in resource areas that are accessible by parents, providers and the public.

CMAs provide direct consultation to parents during the eligibility process and are required to share the "Putting it Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US" brochure with parents. In many Counties, CMAs are co-housed in the local Department of Human Resources with the SNAP agency thereby streamlining the process of sharing information. CMAs also direct individuals to the lead agency website where there is summary of eligibility criteria for the SNAP program and a link to the on-line application site.

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The Child Care Intake line, staffed by a Child Care Division licensing staff, informs parents about the SNAP program and gives out contact information, connects the caller directly with the agency and/or refers the caller to the lead agency website for the online application. As a condition of the lead agency contract with regional Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEA) information is shared with providers so that providers can link families to other programs. Outreach includes community or parent newsletters and/or brochures provided in resource libraries. The QEA provides listing of local agency resources including the County Department of Human Resources which administers the SNAP program locally. The lead agency includes the brochure "Putting it Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US" in licensing application packets. The brochure includes information on all lead agency services including the SNAP program. Providers can share the information with families through their family resource area.

☒ **Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) program:**

Information is shared by the Child Care Management Agency eligibility workers, Quality Enhancement Agencies, the Lead Agency Child Care Intake line, and the lead agency website. These contact points, direct parents to the Alabama Department of Public Health website or to local Departments of Public Health that are located in each County. The United Way Agency maintains the 2-1-1 Connects Alabama referral system. 2-1-1 Connects Alabama is an easy number to remember and dial for information on health and human services organization in the community. Child Care Management Agencies (CMAs) , Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs) and the Lead Agency child care intake line direct parents to the 2-1-1 Connects Alabama to obtain the information on the WIC program.

As a condition of the lead agency contract with regional Quality Enhancement Agencies information is shared with providers so that providers can link families to other programs. Outreach includes providing information on the 2-1-1 Connect Alabama referral system. 2-1-1 Connect Alabama is an easy number to dial for information on health and human services organizations. Community family resource centers also share information with providers. Quality Enhancement Agencies also refer child care programs to local County Health Departments.

☒ **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):**

Information is shared by the Child Care Management Agency (CMAs) eligibility workers, Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs), the Lead Agency Child Care Intake line, and the lead agency website. QEAs provider brochures and other written information resource areas. CMAs give direct consultation to parents during the eligibility process. Information is shared on the different options at child care programs, schools and summer feeding sites.

As a condition of the lead agency contract with regional Quality Enhancement Agencies information is shared with providers so that providers can link families to

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other programs. QEA maintain information on the CACFP program at the state level and the local sponsor program. QEAs also assist providers with understanding information that may be needed for families to access the program through schools as well as information to assist the child care program to maintain eligibility with the CACFP. The Alabama Department of Education is the agency for CACFP and does outreach and training with child care providers. The lead agency supplies a list of newly operating childcare programs to CACFP.

☒ Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP):

Information is shared by the Child Care Management Agency (CMA) eligibility workers and the Lead Agency Child Care Intake line. The lead agency publishes the brochure "Putting it Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US". The brochure has a summary of information and eligibility criteria for the Medicaid program and information on how to contact the agency. CMAs provide direct consultation to parents during the eligibility process and are required to share the "Putting it Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US" brochure with parents. CMAs can also give information on where to locate Medicaid services in the parent's local region. The Child Care Intake line staff maintains a list of resource and services including information for contacting the Medicaid Program. Information shared includes the phone number and website address. The lead agency includes the brochure "Putting it Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US", information on the Children's Health Insurance program and Medicaid in licensing application packets.

As a condition of the lead agency contract with regional Quality Enhancement Agencies information is shared with providers so that providers can link families to other programs. Outreach includes community or parent newsletters and/or brochures. The brochures include information other state agency services including the Medicaid program. Providers can share the information with families through their family resource area.

☒ Programs carried out under Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

Information is shared by the Child Care Management Agency (CMA) eligibility workers, Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs), and the Lead Agency Child Care Intake line. United Cerebral Palsy, *Child Care Enhancement with a Purpose* initiative works with parents through their chosen child care providers to learn about the resources in their area. Brochures and other written information is provided in resource areas and direct consultation is provided to parents during the eligibility process and at Quality Enhancement Agencies.

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2.5.4 Describe how the Lead Agency makes available to parents, providers, and the general public information on research and best practices concerning children’s development, including physical health and development, particularly healthy eating and physical activity. Information about successful parent and family engagement should also be shared. At a minimum, include what information is provided, how the information is provided, and how the information is tailored to a variety of audiences and include any partners in providing this information.

**The lead agency through agreements with regional Quality Enhancement Agencies and Child Care Management Agencies provides written materials to parents, providers and the general public. Child Care Management Agencies provide brochures and information on how to select quality child care, parenting tips and referral to Quality Enhancement Agencies for more detail services. Quality Enhancement Agencies provide community or parent newsletters and/or brochures, community awareness programs, child development materials, presentations to community groups, information on how to recognize and choose high quality child care; and parenting tips and support on balancing work and family life, health and safety, the value of play, the importance of early learning and early brain development.**

**The Lead Agency contracts with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) provide nurse health consultant services to child care providers through the Healthy Child Care Alabama program. Healthy Child Care Alabama program supports on-site visits by nurse health consults to child care centers, homes and related care providers and telephone consultation. The program links children, families and child care providers with community health resources and promotion of child health visits for primary health providers.**

2.5.5 Describe how information on the Lead Agency’s policies regarding the social-emotional and behavioral issues and early childhood mental health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models for those from birth to school age, are shared with families, providers, and the general public. At a minimum, include what information is provided, how the information is provided, and how information is tailored to a variety of audiences and include any partners in providing this information.

The CCDF lead agency serves on the State advisory committee for Project LAUNCH led by the Alabama Department of Mental Health through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Project LAUNCH promotes the wellness of young children from birth to eight years by addressing physical, social, emotional, cognitive and behavior aspects of their development. Through this coordination technical assistance, training, and mentoring is provided to implement screening and assessment tools and appropriate referrals in the child care settings.

The Lead Agency is a founding member of First 5 Alabama and serves on the advisory committee for the organization. The mission of First 5 Alabama is to enhance healthy attachment relationships between children birth to age five and the adults who care for them through promotion, prevention, and intervention supports throughout Alabama's early childhood systems.

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The lead agency in partnership United Cerebral Palsy of Huntsville and the Tennessee Valley offers the CCEP (Childcare Enhancement with a Purpose) initiative that provides free inclusion training to childcare providers statewide. CCEP utilizes experienced teachers and therapists to share simple, practical ways to work with and include children with special needs in childcare centers and family/group childcare homes. The program offers: A curriculum with a multidisciplinary approach which utilizes developmentally appropriate practices; Free training funding for substitute teachers during training; Educational kits; Onsite consultation and technical assistance; Workshops; and other resources for assistance.

The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) includes domains on self-concept/emotional development and social development. The AELG is available for parents and public on request and through the lead agency website.

The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Credential training includes training on the self-concept/emotional development and social development domains included in the AELG. Quality Enhancement Agencies include positive behavioral interventions in their training and technical assistance outreach to child care providers. The lead agency's agreement with United Cerebral Palsy of Huntsville and the Tennessee Valley promotes the inclusion of healthy social and emotional development and resilience in the child care setting. The AELG Credential is imbedded in the Alabama Quality STARS, QRIS staff qualifications and professional development component at STAR level two.

The Lead Agency partners with the Alabama Partnership for Children, the Department of Early Childhood Education and the Alabama Department of Mental Health to fund Help Me Grow Alabama. Help Me Grow Alabama is an affiliate of the Help Me Grow National Network. Help Me Grow Alabama partners with 2-1-1 Connects Alabama for implementation in nine regions of the state. Help Me Grow Alabama connects families to health and developmental resources so children (birth to age eight) can start school healthy and ready to succeed. Core components are: Making the Connection – receive calls regarding a child's developmental concerns, assess needs & available resources, and refer families to services; Educating Providers – educate professionals about developmental surveillance & screening while promoting access to services; Building the Network – develop relationships within the community & maintain an accurate list of local resources; Identifying Gaps & Barriers – collect and analyze data to identify needs and effectively connect families to resource.

2.5.6 Describe the Lead Agency's policies to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children from birth to age 5 in child care and other early childhood programs receiving CCDF funds (98.16(ee)), including how those policies are shared with families, providers, and the general public.

**The following are the Lead Agency's recommendation regarding suspension and expulsion of children for programs receiving CCDF funding and will be implemented effective October 1, 2018:**

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**Suspending or expelling young children does not prepare them to succeed or enter school prepared to learn. This policy regarding the prevention of expulsion and suspensions, offers support to child care programs, teachers and parents to scaffold children’s social and emotional development growth and better equip children to succeed in all areas of development.**

- **A program must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension or expulsion due to a child’s behavior.**
- **A temporary suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.**
- **Program must develop and clearly communicate expulsion and suspension policies to families and to staff members. Written behavior policies should be provided to families before enrollment.**
- **Program must establish appropriate social-emotional and behavioral health promotion practices. Utilize prevention and discipline practices as learning opportunities to guide children’s behavior.**
- **Program should institute an early intervention and consultation process to identify children’s possible need for additional services or teacher professional development.**
- **Program must create program discipline procedure that provides specific guidance regarding the steps that teachers and programs will utilize when presented with challenging behaviors.**
- **Program must involve all program and teaching staff in professional development on all domains of child development, appropriate expectations of young children and reducing challenging behaviors and intervention models.**
- **Program must consult community behavioral health resources regarding challenging behaviors. Ensure all families and program staff members are aware of resources available for families.**
- **Program must communicate children’s individual challenges and successes to the child’s family. Children should have access to comprehensive services and individual accommodations and supports.**

## **2.6 Procedures for Providing Information on Developmental Screenings**

Lead Agencies are required to provide information on developmental screenings, including information on resources and services that the State can deploy, such as the use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program carried out under title XIX of the Social Security Act and developmental screening services available under Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),, in conducting those developmental screenings and in providing referrals to services for children who receive

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subsidies. Lead Agencies must also include a description of how a family or child care provider can use these resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive subsidies and who might be at risk of cognitive or other developmental delays, which can include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays (658E(c)(2)(E)(ii)). Lead Agencies are required to provide this information to eligible families during CCDF intake and to child care providers through training and education (98.33(c)).

Certify by describing:

- a) How the Lead Agency collects and disseminates information on existing resources and services available for conducting developmental screenings to CCDF parents, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers (98.15(b)(3)).

**Information is shared by the Child Care Management Agency (CMA) eligibility workers and the Lead Agency Child Care Intake line. CMA agencies share information on the Help Me Grow Alabama and 2-1-1 Connects Alabama. The agencies connect families to health and developmental resources for children birth to age eight.**

- b) The procedures for providing information on and referring families and child care providers to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program—carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)—and developmental screening services available under Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.).

**Information is shared by the Child Care Management Agency (CMA) eligibility workers and the Lead Agency Child Care Intake line. CMA agencies share information on the Help Me Grow Alabama and 2-1-1 Connects Alabama. The agencies connect families to health and developmental resources for children birth to age eight, including information on EPSDT under the Medicaid program. CMAs also provide families with the Putting it Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US brochure which has a summary of information about the Medicaid program and information on how to contact the agency.**

- c) How the Lead Agency gives information on developmental screenings to parents receiving a subsidy as part of the intake process. Include the information provided, ways it is provided, and any partners in this work.

**A partnership between the lead agency, the Alabama Partnership for Children, the Department of Early Childhood Education, the Alabama Department of Mental Health and funds Help Me Grow Alabama. Help Me Grow Alabama partners with 2-1-1 Connects Alabama connects families to health and developmental resources so children (birth to age eight) can start school healthy and ready to succeed. The Program receives calls from families regarding a child's developmental concerns, assess needs & available resources, and refer families to services; the program educates professionals about developmental surveillance & screening while promoting access to services; the program also develops relationships within the community & maintain an accurate list of local resources.**

**Child Care Management Agencies (CMAs) gives brochures on Help Me Grow to families applying for child care assistance.**

- d) How CCDF families or child care providers receiving CCDF can use the available resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for CCDF children at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays.

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A developmental checklist that can be used by parents or providers is included as a resource in the Alabama Early Learning Guidelines booklet. The booklet is available to parents and the public on the Lead Agency website at [www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov).

- e) How child care providers receive this information through training and professional development.

Through the lead agency's agreement with Alabama Department of Public Health and United Cerebral Palsy of the Huntsville and the Tennessee Valley training and technical assistance is provided to child care providers on the resources available to obtain developmental screenings, recognizing children at risk of developmental delays, and referral of children potentially eligible for Alabama's Early Intervention System. Quality Enhancement agencies train child care providers in the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Developmental Checklist included in the Alabama Early Learning Guidelines credential training.

- f) Provide the citation for this policy and procedure related to providing information on developmental screenings.

***Child Care Subsidy Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 9, Section 3***

## **2.7 Consumer Statement for Parents Receiving CCDF Funds**

Lead Agencies must provide CCDF parents with a consumer statement in hard copy or electronically (such as referral to a consumer education website) that contains specific information about the child care provider they select. This information about the child care provider selected by the parent includes health and safety requirements met by the provider, any licensing or regulatory requirements met by the provider, the date the provider was last inspected, any history of violations of these requirements, and any voluntary quality standards met by the provider. It must also describe how CCDF subsidies are designed to promote equal access, how to submit a complaint through a hotline, and how to contact local resource and referral agencies or other community-based supports that assist parents in finding and enrolling in quality child care (98.33(d)). Please note that if the consumer statement is provided electronically, Lead Agencies should consider how to ensure that the statement is accessible to parents and that parents have a way to contact someone to address questions they have.

Certify by describing:

- a) How the Lead Agency provides parents receiving CCDF funds with a consumer statement.

**Parents receive consumer statements in a hard copy version in the form of THE pamphlets "Choosing Child Care in Alabama", 211 Connects Alabama, Putting in Together FOR THOSE WHO NEED US. These inform the parent of the varying options in deciding the most appropriate child care, what constitutes legally operating and/or licensed care in the Alabama and the availability and of resources.**

**Child Care Management Agencies (CMA) provide to all parents a parent agreement which outlines their rights as a participant in the Child Care Subsidy Program and a Parental Choice statement which outlines the parent's right to choose among the legally operating child care providers that best meet the needs of their child.**

- b) What is included in the statement, including when the consumer statement is provided to families.

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**The *Choosing Child Care in Alabama, A Parents Guide* is provided to parents at application for subsidized care and any time the parent considers making a change in the child care provider. The statement includes items to consider when choosing child care, the child care choice of setting and a definition of each type of setting; what is quality child care; what is licensed child care; a checklist to help parents know what to look for; information on how report complaints; and information on who to contact if help is needed finding child care.**

- c) Provide a link to a sample consumer statement or a description if a link is not available.

[http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Care\\_Services/Parent\\_Guide.aspx](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Care_Services/Parent_Guide.aspx)

### **3 Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families**

In providing child care assistance to families, Lead Agencies are required to implement these policies and procedures: a minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination periods, a process to account for irregular fluctuations in earnings, a policy ensuring that families' work schedules are not disrupted by program requirements, policies to provide for a job search of not fewer than 3 months if the Lead Agency exercises the option to discontinue assistance, and policies for the graduated phase-out of assistance. Also, procedures for the enrollment of homeless children and children in foster care, if served, pending the completion of documentation, are required.

*Note:* Lead Agencies are not prohibited from establishing policies that extend eligibility beyond 12 months to align program requirements. For example, Lead Agencies can allow children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start, state or local prekindergarten, and other collaborative programs to finish the program year. This type of policy promotes continuity for families receiving services through multiple benefit programs.

In this section, Lead Agencies will identify how they define eligible children and families and how the Lead Agency improves access for vulnerable children and families. This section also addresses the policies that protect working families and determine a family's contribution to the child care payment.

#### **3.1 Eligible Children and Families**

At the time when eligibility is determined, children must (1) be younger than age 13; (2) reside with a family whose income does not exceed 85 percent of the State's median income for a family of the same size and whose family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (as certified by a member of said family); and (3)(a) reside with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program or (b) receives, or needs to receive, protective services and resides with a parent or parents not described in (3)(a.) (658P(4)).

##### **3.1.1 Eligibility criteria based on a child's age**

- a) The CCDF program serves children from **birth** (weeks/months/years) to **12** years (through age 12). *Note:* Do not include children incapable of self-care or under court supervision, who are reported below in (b) and (c).

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- b) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care (658E(c)(3)(B); 658P(3))?

☐ No

☒ **Yes**, and the upper age is 18 (may not equal or exceed age 19). If yes, provide the Lead Agency definition of physical or mental incapacity:

**Incapacity (or incapacitated) means physical or mental condition which, based on the conclusions of a licensed physician, psychiatrist or psychologist, renders a parent incapable of providing adequate care for child or, in the case of a child, incapable of caring for himself or herself.**

- c) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are under court supervision (658P(3); 658E(c)(3)(B))?

☒ **No**

☐ Yes, and the upper age is        (may not equal or exceed age 19).

- d) How does the Lead Agency define the following eligibility terms?

“residing with”:

**The child must reside on a permanent basis with a parent who is a resident of the state of Alabama, meaning the parent is in the state voluntarily with the intention of making Alabama his or her home.**

“in loco parentis”:

**Adult relatives without legal custody or guardianship of the child; foster parents of a child in legal custody of the Department; and, adults with whom the Department places a child for Protective Service reasons.**

### 3.1.2 Eligibility criteria based on reason for care

- a) How does the Lead Agency define “working or attending a job training and educational program” for the purposes of CCDF eligibility at the time of determination? Provide the definitions below for:

“Working”:

**Employment for a minimum average of 15 hours per week (either alone or in combination with a job training or educational program) in any legally operating place of business from which the parent receives wages, salaries, commissions and tips equal to, or greater than, the federal minimum wage.**

“Job training”:

- b) **Enrolled in, attending and satisfactorily participating in a job training or educational program, (either alone or in combination with gainful employment, for a minimum average of 15 hours per week.**

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“Education”:

**Enrolled in, attending and satisfactorily participating in a job training or educational program, (either alone or in combination with gainful employment, for minimum average of 15 hours per week). Students enrolled full-time in an educational program, in accordance with the institution’s definition of full-time are deemed to meet this requirement.**

“Attending job training or education” (e.g. number of hours, travel time):

**Enrolled in, attending and satisfactorily participating in a job training or educational program, either alone or in combination with gainful employment, for minimum average of 15 hours per week.**

- c) Does the Lead Agency allow parents to qualify for CCDF assistance on the basis of education and training participation alone (without additional minimum work requirements)?

☐ No. If no, describe the additional work requirements:  

☒ **Yes.** If yes, define the job-search time limit, keeping in mind a minimum of 3 months is required to be provided when a parent experiences a non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity:

**A parent may receive services for a period not to exceed 90 days when the parent experiences a non-temporary loss of participation an allowable activity.**

- d) Does the Lead Agency consider engaging in a job search or seeking employment an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination (at application) and at the 12-month eligibility redetermination (must provide a minimum of 3 months)?

☒ **No.**

☐ Yes. If yes, describe the policy or procedure.  

- e) Does the Lead Agency provide child care to children in protective services?

☐ No.

☒ **Yes.** If yes:

- i. Please provide the Lead Agency’s definition of “protective services”:

*Note:* Federal requirements allow other vulnerable children identified by the Lead Agency not formally in child protection to be included in the Lead Agency’s definition of protective services for CCDF purposes. A Lead Agency may elect to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care when foster care parents are *not* working or are *not* in education/training activities, but this provision should be included in the protective services definition above.

**Protective Services is defined as services provided to, or on behalf of, children in response to reports of alleged abuse, neglect, or exploitation.**

- ii. Are children in foster care considered to be in protective services for the purposes of eligibility at determination?  
☒ No  
☐ Yes
- iii. Does the Lead Agency waive the income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis (658E(c)(5))?  
☐ No  
☒ Yes
- iv. Does the Lead Agency provide respite care to custodial parents of children in protective services?  
☐ No  
☒ Yes

### 3.1.3 Eligibility criteria based on family income

- a) How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility at the point of determination?

**Income is defined as the total gross monthly income of all family members.**

- b) Provide the CCDF income eligibility limits in the table below. Complete columns (a) and (b) based on maximum eligibility at initial entry into CCDF. Complete columns (c) and (d) *only if* the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85 percent of the current state median income (SMI) at the initial eligibility determination point. Fill in the chart based on the most populous area of the state (the area serving the highest number of CCDF children).
- c) If the income eligibility limits are not statewide, describe how many jurisdictions set their own income eligibility limits and provide the income limit ranges across the jurisdictions (e.g. range from [lowest limit] to [highest limit]) ( 98.16(i)(3)).

**Income eligibility limits are statewide.**

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	85% of SMI (\$/Month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	(IF APPLICABLE) (\$/Month) Maximum “Entry” Income Level if Lower Than 85% of Current SMI	(IF APPLICABLE) (% of SMI) [Divide (c) by (a), multiply by 100] Income Level if Lower Than 85% of Current SMI
1	\$2,961	\$2,517	\$1315	44%
2	\$3,872	\$3,291	\$1783	46%
3	\$4,783	\$4,066	\$2598	54%
4	\$5,694	\$4,840	\$3138	55%
5	\$6,605	\$5,614	\$3678	56%

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*Reminder:* Income limits must be established and reported in terms of current SMI based on the most recent data published by the Bureau of the Census (98.20(a)(2)(i)) even if the federal poverty level is used in implementing the program. SMI guidelines are available at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/liheap-im2017-03>.

- d) SMI source and year **SMI source: LIHEAP; Year: 2017**
- e) What was the date that these eligibility limits in column (c) became effective?

**October 1, 2017**

- f) Provide the citation or link, if available, for the income eligibility limits.

**Link is not available. Information will be available online September 2018.**

3.1.4 Lead Agencies are required to ensure that children receiving CCDF funds do not have family assets that exceed \$1,000,000, as certified by a family member (98.20(a)(2)(ii)).

- a) Describe how the family member certifies that family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (e.g., a checkoff on the CCDF application).

**Families certify on the eligibility application. Families report all countable income and certify that assets do not exceed \$1,000,000.**

- b) Does the Lead Agency waive the asset limit on a case-by-case basis for families defined as receiving, or in need of, protective services?

☒ **No.**

☐ Yes. If yes, please identify the policy or procedure:  

3.1.5 Describe any additional eligibility conditions or priority rules applied by the Lead Agency during eligibility determination or redetermination (98.20(b)).

**Homeless individuals, as defined by the Lead agency's subsidy policy, may receive priority services (not subject to the waiting list) for up to 90 days to prove eligibility. Minor parents (parents under the age 18) may qualify for priority services should they meet they been in an allowable activity.**

3.1.6 Lead Agencies are required to take into consideration children's development and promote continuity of care when authorizing child care services (98.21(f); 98.16(h)(6)). Examples include partnering with Head Start, prekindergarten, or other high-quality programs to create a package of arrangements that accommodates parent's work schedules; providing more intensive case management for families with children with multiple risk factors; and including in the eligibility determination process a question about whether a child has an Individualized Education Program or Individual Family Service Plan. Describe the Lead Agency's policies and procedures that take into consideration children's development and learning and that promote continuity of care when authorizing child care services.

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### 3.1.7 Graduated phase-out of assistance.

Lead Agencies are required to provide for a graduated phase-out of assistance for families whose income has increased above the state's initial income threshold at the time of redetermination but remains below the federal threshold of 85 percent of the state median income. Providing a graduated phase-out promotes continuity by allowing for wage growth, allows for a tapered transition out of the child care subsidy program as income increases, and supports long-term self-sufficiency for families.

Lead Agencies that establish initial family income eligibility below 85 percent of SMI must provide a graduated phase-out by implementing a two-tiered eligibility threshold, with the second tier of eligibility (used at the time of eligibility redetermination) to be set at:

- i. 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size
- ii. An amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold that:
  - (A) Takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family
  - (B) Provides justification that the second eligibility threshold is:
    - (1) Sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability
    - (2) Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption.

At redetermination, a child shall be considered eligible if his or her parents are working or attending a job training or educational program even if their income exceeds the Lead Agency's income limit to initially qualify for assistance as long as their income does not exceed the second tier of eligibility (98.21(a); 98.21(b)(1)).

A family eligible for services via the graduated phase-out of assistance is considered eligible under the same conditions as other eligible families with the exception of the copayment restrictions, which do not apply to a graduated phase-out. To help families transition off of child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust copay amounts for families whose children are determined eligible under a graduated phase-out and may require additional reporting on changes in family income. However, Lead Agencies must still ensure that any additional reporting requirements do not constitute an undue burden on families.

- a) Check and describe the option that best identifies the Lead Agency's policies and procedures regarding the graduated phase-out of assistance.
  - ☐ N/A—The Lead Agency sets its initial eligibility level at 85 percent of SMI and, therefore, is not required to provide a graduated phase-out period.
  - ☒ The Lead Agency sets the second eligibility threshold at 85 percent of SMI.
    - Describe the policies and procedures.

**Child Care Subsidy Program policy provides that once initial eligibility has been established a family may continue to be eligible for the program provided the**

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**child resides with a family who total countable income does not exceed 85% of the state median income for a family of the same size.**

- Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

**Child Care Subsidy Program Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 4, Section 4.**

- ☐ The Lead Agency sets the second eligibility threshold at an amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold.

- Provide the second eligibility level for a family of three.
- Describe how the second eligibility threshold:
  - i. Takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family:
  - ii. Is sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability.
  - iii. Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption:
  - iv. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure:

- b) Does the Lead Agency gradually adjust copays for families eligible under the graduated phase-out period?

☐ No

☒ **Yes**

- i. If yes, describe how the Lead Agency gradually adjusts copays for families under a graduated phase-out.

**Copays are adjusted incrementally based on the family size and increases in the monthly gross income.**

- ii. If yes, does the Lead Agency require additional reporting requirements during the graduated phase-out period? (Note: Additional reporting requirements are also discussed in section 3.3.3 of the plan.)

☐ No.

☐ **Yes. Describe:**

**Families are required to report changes that impact eligibility within in 10 days of the change. Changes required to be reported includes income and family size, which determines the co pay.**

### 3.1.8 Fluctuation in earnings.

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate how their processes for initial determination and redetermination take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings (658E(c)(2)(N)(i)(II)). The Lead Agency must put in place policies that ensure that temporary increases in income, including temporary increases that can result in a monthly income exceeding 85 percent of SMI (calculated on a monthly basis) from seasonal employment or other temporary work schedules, do not affect eligibility or family copayments (98.21(c)).

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Describe the Lead Agency's policy related to the fluctuation in earnings requirement, including how temporary increases that result in a monthly income exceeding 85 percent of SMI (calculated on a monthly basis) do not affect eligibility or family copayments.

**The lead agency averages weekly income for the four preceding weeks and averages monthly income for the three preceding months (if applicable). Irregular income is defined as income received irregularly or in irregular amount. To calculate income that is received irregularly and in irregular amounts the average of the total countable income received during the three months prior to the month during which eligibility is being determined is verified and the total is divided by three. A temporary increase in income that is not representative of ongoing income is not counted.**

3.1.9 Lead Agencies are required to have procedures for documenting and verifying that children receiving CCDF funds meet eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination (98.68(c)). Check the information that the Lead Agency documents and verifies and describe, at a minimum, what information is required and how often. Check all that apply.

☒ Applicant identity. Describe:

**Documentation includes driver's license, work ID, birth certificate, school ID, non-drivers ID and government issued IDs.**

☒ Applicant's relationship to the child. Describe:

**Documentation includes birth certificates, paternity affidavits, court documents, school records, other federal/state agency records.**

☒ Child's information for determining eligibility (e.g., identity, age, citizen/immigration status). Describe:

**Documentation includes birth certificates, paternity affidavits, court documents, school records, other federal/state agency records.**

☒ Work. Describe:

**Includes documentation from the employer in the form of pay receipts or written statement from the employer, or written documentation from the entity from which employment income is received.**

☒ Job training or educational program. Describe:

**Documentation from the education institution or job training agency.**

☒ Family income. Describe:

**Includes documentation from the employer in form of pay receipts or written statement from the employer, or written documentation from the entity from which the income is received.**

☐ Household composition. Describe:

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☐ Applicant residence. Describe:

**Documentation includes rent or lease agreement, mortgage agreement, utility receipts, otherstate or federal agency records. Required at initial application, redetermination, and when the applicant's residence changes.**

☐ Other. Describe:  

3.1.10 Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to assure the timeliness of eligibility determinations upon receipt of applications?

☒ Time limit for making eligibility determinations. Describe length of time

**Initial applications must be approved or denied within 300 days of the application date. Continuing eligibility must be approved or denied no later than the last working day of the current eligibility period. Caseworkers must process information received from families within three (3) days of receipt of the information.**

☒ Track and monitor the eligibility determination process

☐ Other. Describe  

☐ None

3.1.11 Informing parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirement.

Lead Agencies are required to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child younger than age 6 (98.16(v); 98.33(f)).

Lead Agencies must coordinate with TANF programs to ensure that TANF families with young children will be informed of their right not to be sanctioned if they meet the criteria set forth by the state/territory TANF agency in accordance with Section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care.

*Note:* The TANF agency, not the CCDF Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record.

a) Identify the TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions:

**The Alabama Department of Human Resources, Family Services Division**

b) Provide the following definitions established by the TANF agency:

- “Appropriate child care”:

**Any legally operating child care provider 19 years old or older. In addition, state law requires an individual to be licensed if the individual provides care for children who**

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are unrelated to the individual, in the individual's own home for more than four hours per day.

- "Reasonable distance":

The distance from the home to the place of employment is unreasonable considering the expected wage and the time and cost of commuting. Employment is not considered suitable if daily commuting time exceeds two hours. The timeframe authorized for care may be any time affiliated with the client's participation, such as travel time, including reasonable travel to and from a child care facility.

- "Unsuitability of informal child care":

Informal child care is care legally provided in the child's home by either a relative or non-relative or care provided out of the child's home by a relative or a license-exempted non-relative. TANF policy does not allow payment for childcare if the individual providing the care is unrelated to the child, is not licensed, and keeps the child more than four hours per day. The individual is considered unrelated if the individual is not related to the child by blood, marriage or adoption as follows: parent, grandparent, sibling (step or half), uncle, aunt, and spouses of these. Verify relationship only if questionable. In addition, due to wage and hour laws and DHR maximum payment restrictions, no in-home care (meaning the home of the child, but not the provider) may be authorized for less than minimum wage.

- "Affordable child care arrangements":

In determining whether or not appropriate childcare is available, the case manager should first ask the client if s/he is able to arrange her/his own childcare at no cost. Find out who currently provides back-up childcare when needed, whether the arrangements meet the conditions for legally provided care, and the amount charged by the individual providing the care. Then determine based on the client's statement of her/his situation if that individual is both able and willing to provide child care to enable the client to work and/or participate in JOBS (Job Opportunity and Basic Skills) activities, and if the care meets the guidelines for legal care. If so, authorize and ensure payment as appropriate, if the back-up childcare arrangement is not legal or the individual is unable or unwilling to provide the care on a regular basis, the case manager must work with the client to find other means of obtaining legal childcare services. This must be done before requiring the client to participate in any activity for which the care is needed, including job search. The final decision as to which type of care will best meet her/his needs and the needs of each child rests with the client. However, the client may not use policy regarding parental choice to circumvent JOBS participation requirements. The client must choose from the resources that are available if the resources are appropriate, accessible, and affordable. For example, if appropriate legal childcare services are otherwise available (affordable and accessible) to the client, s/he may not, without good cause, be deferred from participation just because s/he would prefer a different arrangement.

- c) How are parents who receive TANF benefits informed about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirements?

☐ In writing

☒ Verbally

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☐ Other. Describe:  

d) Provide the citation for the TANF policy or procedure:

**JOBS Program Policy Manual (JPPM), Section 505-C1g, Section 610-A8, Section 610-B1b, Section 610-B3b, Section 610-B5**

### 3.2 Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families

Lead Agencies are required to give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, which can include vulnerable populations, in families with very low incomes and to children experiencing homelessness (658E(c)(3)(B); 98.46(a)). The prioritization of CCDF assistance services is not limited to eligibility determination (i.e., the establishment of a waiting list or the ranking of eligible families in priority order to be served).

*Note:* CCDF defines “child experiencing homelessness” as a child who is homeless, as defined in Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a) (98.2).

3.2.1 Describe how the Lead Agency will prioritize or target child care services for the following children and families.

a) How does the Lead Agency define “children with special needs” and include a description of how services are prioritized:

**Children with special needs is defined as child(ren) who is receiving protective services or foster care services from the Department and who has been determined by the Department to need child care services. Children meeting this definition are given priority for services over other CCDF eligible children and are not subject to the waiting list.**

b) How does the Lead Agency define of “families with very low incomes” and include a description of how services are prioritized:

**Families with very low income are defined as a family with income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. These families are prioritized by waiving the co-payment when eligibility is established.**

c) Describe how services are prioritized for children experiencing homelessness, as defined by the CCDF:

**Families that are experiencing homelessness receive priority over other CCDF eligible families. These families may receive up to 90 days of services to allow time to gather documentation to prove eligibility.**

d) Describe how services are prioritized, if applicable, for families receiving TANF program funds, those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF (98.16(i)(4)):

**Families receiving TANF and participating in the JOBS (Job Opportunity and Basic Skills) program, and families who have received TANF within the past 6 months receive priority for care over other CCDF eligible families. The families are not subject to the waiting list**

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3.2.2 Lead Agencies are required to expend CCDF funds to (1) permit the enrollment (after an initial eligibility determination) of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained, (2) provide training and TA to child care providers and the appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving homeless children and families (addressed in section 6), and (3) conduct specific outreach to homeless families (658E(c)(3); 98.51).

- a) Describe the procedures to permit the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained.

**Families are allowed up to 90 days of service to allow time to obtain required documentation to establish eligibility.**

- b) Describe the procedures to conduct outreach for children experiencing homelessness (as defined by the CCDF) and their families.

**The Lead Agency is conducting outreach to homeless families by providing information on the program to the Homeless Liaisons across the state. The State Homeless Coordinator has provided training and technical assistance to contracted Quality Enhancement Agencies to assist providers in identifying and serving these families. These agencies provide assistance to child care providers in their efforts to serve homeless families. Training is provided to Child Care Management Agencies to assist these agencies in identification of homeless families and making referral to community resources.**

*Note:* The Lead Agency shall pay any amount owed to a child care provider for services provided as a result of the initial eligibility determination, and any CCDF payment made prior to the final eligibility determination shall not be considered an error or improper payment (98.51(a)(1)(ii)).

3.2.3 Lead Agencies must establish a grace period that allows homeless children and children in foster care to receive CCDF assistance while providing their families with a reasonable time to take any necessary actions to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements (as described in section 5). The length of such a grace period shall be established in consultation with the state, territorial, or tribal health agency (658E(c)(2)(i)(I); 98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)).

*Note:* Any payment for such a child during the grace period shall not be considered an error or improper payment (98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)(2)).

- a) Describe procedures to provide a grace period to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements, including how the length of the grace period was established in consultation with the state, territorial, or tribal health agency for:

☒ Children experiencing homelessness (as defined by CCDF). Provide the citation for this policy and procedure.

**Families have a 90 day grace period to provide documentation to maintain eligibility.**

**Policy Citation: Child Care Subsidy Program Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 5, section 8.**

- ☐ Children who are in foster care.   Provide the citation for this policy and procedure.

- 
- b) Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates with licensing agencies and other relevant state, territorial, tribal, and local agencies to provide referrals and support to help families with children receiving services during a grace period comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements (98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)(4)).

**The lead agency provides assistance in locating resources to assist the family in providing documentation. Licensing agency, which is a Division of the Lead Agency, coordinates with the Subsidy Program to verify status of families who do not have immunization documentation on file with the child care provider. The Subsidy Program notifies the licensing agency of the time limits of the individual families grace period.**

- c) Does the Lead Agency establish grace periods for other children who are not experiencing homelessness or in foster care?

☒ **No.**

☐ Yes. Describe:  

### 3.3 Protection for Working Families

#### 3.3.1 12-Month eligibility.

The Lead Agency is required to establish a minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination period, regardless of changes in income (as long as the income does not exceed the federal threshold of 85 percent of the state median income) or temporary changes in participation in work, training, or educational activities (658E(c)(2)(N)(i) and (ii)).

This change means that a Lead Agency may not terminate CCDF assistance during the 12-month period if a family has an increase in income that exceeds the state's income eligibility threshold, but not the federal threshold of 85 percent of SMI. The Lead Agency may not terminate assistance prior to the end of the 12-month period if a family experiences a temporary job loss or a temporary change in participation in a training or educational activity. A temporary change in eligible activity includes, at a minimum, any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness; any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working; any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program; any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program; any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program that does not exceed 3 months or a longer period of time established by the Lead Agency; any changes in age, including turning 13 years old during the 12-month eligibility period; and any changes in residency within the state, territory, or tribal service area.

- a) Describe the Lead Agency's policies and procedures in implementing the minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination requirements, including when a family experiences a temporary change in activity.

**All eligible families receiveing CCDF funds shall have no less than 12 months of eligibility. Familys are redetermined at the end of the 12 month eligibility cycle. The parent do not experience an increase in parent fee during the 12 month eligibility period, regardless of any increase in the parent income. Familys remain eligible as long as the income does not exceed 85% of the State Median Income.**

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- b) How does the Lead Agency define “temporary change?”

**A temporary change in work, education or training is defined as any non-permanent cessation of participation in an allowable work or education/training activity that is expected to last 90 days or less and includes maternity leave, temporary lay-off, school breaks, illness of the parent or child, or seasonal break in employment.**

- c) Provide the citation for this policy and/or procedure.

**Child Care Subsidy Program Policies and Procedures Manual- Chapter 4.**

**3.3.2 Option to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period.**

Lead Agencies have the option, but are not required, to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s *non-temporary* loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program, otherwise known as a parent’s eligible activity (i.e., if the parent experiences a temporary change in his or her status as working or participating in a training or educational program, as described in section 3.3.1 of the plan).

If the Lead Agency chooses the option to discontinue assistance due to a parent’s non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity, it must continue assistance at least at the same level for a period of not fewer than 3 months after each such loss or cessation for the parent to engage in a job search and to resume work or resume attendance in a job training or educational program. At the end of the minimum 3-month period of continued assistance, if the parent has engaged in a qualifying work, training, or educational program activity with an income below 85 percent of SMI, assistance cannot be terminated, and the child must continue receiving assistance until the next scheduled redetermination or, at the Lead Agency option, for an additional minimum 12-month eligibility period.

- a) Does the Lead Agency choose to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity and offer a minimum 3-month period to allow parents to engage in a job search and to resume participation in an eligible activity?

☐ No, the state/territory does not allow this option to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s *non-temporary* loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program.

☒ Yes, the Lead Agency discontinues assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s non-temporary loss of work or cessation of eligible activity and provides a minimum 3-month period of job search. If yes:

- i. Provide a summary describing the Lead Agency’s policies and procedures for discontinuing assistance due to a parent’s non-temporary change:

**A parent’s non-temporary change in participation will results in the discountuation of services during the 12 month eligibility if the parent is not participating in a required activity for the minimum participation hours by the end of the 90 day job search period.**

- ii. Describe what specific actions/changes trigger the job-search period.

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**Job search period is triggered when the parents reports a temporary or non-temporary cessation of the participation in work or education/training activity or participation in a required work or education/training activity drops below an average of 15 hours per week.**

- iii. How long is the job-search period (must be at least 3 months)?

**90 days**

- iv. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

**Child Care Subsidy Program Policies and Procedures Manul Chapter 8 section 6.**

- b) The Lead Agency may discontinue assistance prior to the next 12-month redetermination in the following limited circumstances. Check and describe any circumstances in which the Lead Agency chooses to discontinue assistance prior to the next 12-month redetermination. Check all that apply.

☐ Not applicable.

☒ Excessive unexplained absences despite multiple attempts by the Lead Agency or designated entity to contact the family and provider, including the prior notification of a possible discontinuation of assistance.

- i. Define the number of unexplained absences identified as excessive:

**Absences that exceed more than 10 calendar days without a written doctor's excuse**

- ii. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure:

**Child Care Subsidy Program Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 9, Section 2.**

☒ A change in residency outside of the state, territory, or tribal service area. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure:

**Child Care Subsidy Program Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 8, Section 8**

☒ Substantiated fraud or intentional program violations that invalidate prior determinations of eligibility. Describe the violations that lead to discontinued assistance and provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

**The following substantiated violations can lead to discontinuation of child care assistance: Making a false or misleading statement to obtain benefits for which the parent is not eligible to recieve; failing to report a change in order to receive benefits for which the parent is not eligible to recieve; altering documents to receive benefits for which theparent is not eligible to receive; unauthorized use of a Time and Attendance System (TAS) card and having possession of an Alabama TAS card to obtain benefits for which the parent is not eligible. Citation: CSPPP Chapter 14 Sections 2 and 9.**

### 3.3.3 Change reporting during the 12-month eligibility period.

The Lead Agency must describe the requirements for parents to report changes in circumstances during the 12-month eligibility period and describe efforts to ensure that such requirements do

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not place an undue burden on eligible families, which could impact the continuity of care for children and stability for families receiving CCDF services (98.16(h)(1)).

*Note:* Responses should exclude reporting requirements for a graduated phase-out, which were described in question 3.1.7(b).

Families are required to report a change to the Lead Agency at any time during the 12-month eligibility period if the family's income exceeds 85 percent of the state median income, taking into account irregular fluctuations in income (98.21(e)(1)). If the Lead Agency chooses the option to terminate assistance, as described in section 3.3.2 of the plan, they may require families to report a non-temporary change (as described in section 3.3.3 of the plan) in work, training or educational activities (otherwise known as a parent's eligible activity).

a) Does the Lead Agency require families to report a non-temporary change in a parent's eligible activity?

☐ No

☒ Yes

b) Any additional reporting requirements during the 12-month eligibility period must be limited to items that impact a family's eligibility (e.g., income changes over 85 percent of SMI or that impact the Lead Agency's ability to contact the family or pay the child care providers (e.g., a family's change of address, a change in the parent's choice of child care provider).

Check and describe any additional reporting requirements required by the Lead Agency during the 12-month eligibility period. Check all that apply.

☒ Additional changes that may impact a family's eligibility during the 12-month period.

Describe:

**A change in the family size, income, choice of child care provider, and address.**

☒ Changes that impact the Lead Agency's ability to contact the family. Describe:

**A change in the family's residence within the lead agency service area.**

☒ Changes that impact the Lead Agency's ability to pay child care providers. Describe:

**Includes a change in the provider type or the provider's legally operating status.**

Any additional reporting requirements that the Lead Agency chooses, as its option to require from parents during the 12-month eligibility period, shall not require an office visit. In addition, the Lead Agency must offer a range of notification options to accommodate families.

c) How does the Lead Agency allow for families to report changes to ensure that reporting requirements are not burdensome and to avoid an impact on continued eligibility between redeterminations? Check all that apply.

☒ Phone

☒ Email

☐ Online forms

☐ Extended submission hours

☒ Other. Describe:

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**Parent may report changes by fax, in person, and by mail.**

- d) Families must have the option to voluntarily report changes on an ongoing basis during the 12-month eligibility period.

Lead Agencies are required to act on information reported by the family if it will reduce the family's co-payment or increase the family's subsidy. Lead Agencies are prohibited from acting on information reported by the family that would reduce the family's subsidy unless the information reported indicates that the family's income exceeds 85 percent of SMI after considering irregular fluctuations in income or, at the option of the Lead Agency, the family has experienced a non-temporary change in eligible activity.

- i. Describe any other changes that the Lead Agency allows families to report.  
**Families may report reduction in income or hours of participation in an allowable activity, an increase in family size, change in allowable education/training activity, and residency.**
- ii. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

**Policy Citation: Child Care Subsidy Program Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 8**

### 3.3.4 Prevent the disruption of employment, education, or job training activities.

Lead Agencies are required to have procedures and policies in place to ensure that parents (especially parents in families receiving assistance under the TANF program) are not required to unduly disrupt their employment, education, or job training activities to comply with the Lead Agency's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility for assistance (658E(c)(2)(N)(ii); 98.21(d)).

Examples include developing strategies to inform families and their providers of an upcoming redetermination and that information required of the family, pre-populating subsidy renewal forms, having parents confirm that the information is accurate, and/or asking only for the information necessary to make an eligibility redetermination. In addition, states and territories can offer a variety of family-friendly methods for submitting documentation for eligibility redetermination.

- a) Describe the Lead Agency's procedures and policies to ensure that parents (especially parents receiving TANF program funds) do not have their employment, education, or job training unduly disrupted to comply with the state/territory's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility. List relevant policy citations.

**Notifications of redetermination are mailed to the parent during the month prior to the month that eligibility ends. For families receiving TANF, Protected Service and Foster Care, the County Department referring worker also receives notification of the need to redetermine services along with the parent to allow for the additional notification to the parent. Documentation provided by the TANF agency is accepted to make the determination of eligibility of services.**

**Policy Citation: Child Care Subsidy Program Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 3, Section 3 and Chapter 5, Section 2, Section 4 and Section 5.**

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b) How are families allowed to submit documentation for redetermination? Check all that apply.

☒ **Mail**

☒ **Email**

☐ Online forms

☒ **Fax**

☒ **In-person**

☐ Extended submission hours

☐ Other. Describe:  

### 3.4 Family Contribution to Payments

Lead Agencies are required to establish and periodically revise a sliding-fee scale for CCDF families that varies based on income and the size of the family to determine each family's contribution (i.e., co-payment) that is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF funds (658E(c)(5)). In addition to income and the size of the family, the Lead Agency may use other factors when determining family contributions/co-payments. Lead Agencies, however, may NOT use cost of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining copayments (98.45(k)(2)).

*Note:* To help families transition off of child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust co-pay amounts for families determined to be eligible under a graduated phase-out. However, section 3.4 applies *only* to families in their initial/entry eligibility period. See section 3.1.4 Graduated Phase-Out regarding co-pays during the graduated phase-out period.

3.4.1 Provide the CCDF co-payments in the chart below according to family size for one child in care.

a) Fill in the chart based on the most populous area of the State (area serving highest number of CCDF children).

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Family Size	Lowest “Entry” Income Level Where Family Is First Charged Co-Pay (Greater Than \$0)	What Is the Monthly Co-Payment for a Family of This Size Based on the Income Level in (a)?	The Co-Payment in Column (b) is What Percentage of the Income in Column (a)?	Highest “Entry” Income Level Before a Family Is No Longer Eligible	What Is the Monthly Co-Payment for a Family of This Size Based on the Income Level in (d)?	The Co-Payment in Column (e) is What Percentage of the Income in Column (d)?
1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	\$1,373	\$34.40	3%	\$3,291	\$228.00	7%
3	\$1,733	\$34.40	2%	\$4,066	\$228.00	6%
4	\$2,093	\$34.40	2%	\$4,840	\$228.00	5%
5	\$2,453	\$34.40	1%	\$5,614	\$228.00	4%

b) What is the effective date of the sliding-fee scale(s)?

**The lead agency is proposing that effective October 1, 2018 all families at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty level will not have a parental co-payment.**

**The above income level reflects the 2018 federal poverty level and 85% of the FY2017 state median income (SMI).**

**Highest income level before a family is no longer eligible is 85% of the SMI for the applicable family size.**

c) Provide the link to the sliding-fee scale:

**FY2019 sliding fee scale will be available on line September 2018.**

d) If the sliding-fee scale is not statewide, describe how many jurisdictions set their own sliding-fee scale (98.16(i)(3)).

**The sliding fee scale is statewide.**

3.4.2 How will the family’s contribution be calculated, and to whom will it be applied? Check all that apply.

☒ The fee is a dollar amount and:

☒ The fee is per child, with the same fee for each child.

☐ The fee is per child and is discounted for two or more children.

☐ The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.

☐ No additional fee is charged after certain number of children.

☐ The fee is per family.

☐ The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe:

☐ Other. Describe:

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- ☐ The fee is a percent of income and:
- ☐ The fee is per child, with the same percentage applied for each child.
  - ☐ The fee is per child, and a discounted percentage is applied for two or more children.
  - ☐ The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.
  - ☐ No additional percentage is charged after certain number of children.
  - ☐ The fee is per family.
  - ☐ The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe:
  - ☐ Other. Describe:

3.4.3 Does the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine each family's co-payment (658E(c)(3)(B))? Reminder – Lead Agencies may NOT use cost of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining copayments (98.45(k)(2)).

- ☒ **No.**
- ☐ Yes, check and describe those additional factors below.
  - ☐ Number of hours the child is in care. Describe:
  - ☐ Lower co-payments for a higher quality of care, as defined by the state/territory. Describe:
  - ☐ Other. Describe:

3.4.4 The Lead Agency may waive contributions/co-payments from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size (98.45(k)) or for families who are receiving or needing to receive protective services, as determined for purposes of CCDF eligibility, or who meet other criteria established by the Lead Agency (98.45(k)(4)). Does the Lead Agency waive family contributions/co-payments for any of the following? Check all that apply.

- ☐ No, the Lead Agency does not waive family contributions/co-payments.
- ☒ Yes, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments for families with an income at or below the poverty level for families of the same size. The poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family size of 3 is.

**The Lead Agency proposes in FY2019 to waive co-payments for families with an income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. The poverty level for a family size of 3 is \$1,732.**

- ☒ Yes, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments for families who are receiving or needing to receive protective services, as determined by the Lead Agency for purposes of CCDF eligibility. Describe the policy and provide the policy citation.

- ☐ Yes, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments for other criteria established by the Lead Agency. Describe the policy and provide the policy citation. .

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3.4.5 Does the Lead Agency allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment in instances where the provider's price exceeds the subsidy payment (98.45(b)(5))?

☐ No.

☒ Yes. If yes:

- a) Provide the rationale for the Lead Agency's policy to allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment, including a demonstration of how the policy promotes affordability and access for families?

**The lead agency allows the provider to choose whether or not to waive amounts above the required co-payment amount based on the provider's ability to offer the level and quality of services to all families not just subsidized families. Parents may choose from among all legally operating providers. The 2017 Market Rate Survey data indicates that DHR provider reimbursements for child care costs are within \$31 or less of the average market rate for all age groups of children and for all categories of providers (day care centers, family day care homes, and group day care homes) in all nine Child Care Management regions. Tiered rates Quality STARS rates for licensed/regulated care are within \$26 or less of the average market rate; the rate for STAR 4 programs is within \$20 or less of the average market rate the rate for STAR 5 programs is within \$18 or less of the average market rate for STAR 5 programs.**

- b) Provide data (including data on the size and frequency of such amounts) on the extent to which CCDF providers charge additional amounts to families.

**The lead agency has not conducted a data study of the frequency of extent and frequency of provider's that charge additional amounts to families.**

- c) Describe the Lead Agency's analysis of the interaction between the additional amounts charged to families with the required family co-payment, and the ability of current subsidy payment rates to provide access to care without additional fees.

**Analysis has shown that the biggest impact on family ability to access care is the location and availability of care rather than the additional amounts charged by providers above the required co-payment. In FY2019, the lead agency proposes to waive co-payment for families with income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. This will allow the most vulnerable families to receive care subsidized at a higher amount.**

3.4.6 How will the Lead Agency ensure that the family contribution/co-payment, based on a sliding-fee scale, is affordable and is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF funds? Check all that apply.

☐ Limit the maximum co-payment per family. Describe:  

☐ Limit the combined amount of co-payment for all children to a percentage of family income. List the percentage of the co-payment limit and describe.

☒ Minimize the abrupt termination of assistance before a family can afford the full cost of care ("the cliff effect") as part of the graduated phase-out of assistance discussed in 3.1.5. Describe:

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**The graduated phase-out is designed to allow families to remain on the program up to 85% SMI that provides a gradual increase in copayments that the subsidy amount paid is less than or equal to the co-payment itself.**

☒ Other. Describe:

**The lead agency limits the amount of co-payment per child to a percentage of family income. The co-payment per child is set to be at or below 7% of total family income.**

## **4 Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children**

A core purpose of CCDF is to promote parental choice and to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suit their family's needs. Parents have the option to choose from center-based care, family child care or care provided in the child's own home. In supporting parental choice, the Lead Agencies must ensure that families receiving CCDF funding have the opportunity to choose from the full range of eligible child care settings and must provide families with equal access to child care that is comparable to that of non-CCDF families. Lead Agencies must employ strategies to increase the supply and to improve the quality of child care services, especially in underserved areas. This section addresses strategies that the Lead Agency uses to promote parental choice, ensure equal access, and increase the supply of child care.

### **4.1 Parental Choice in Relation to Certificates, Grants, or Contracts**

The parent(s) of each eligible child who receive(s) or is offered financial assistance for child care services has the option of either receiving a child care certificate or, if available, enrolling his or her child with a provider that has a grant or contract for providing child care services (658E(c)(2)(A); 98.30(a)). Even if a parent chooses to enroll his or her child with a provider who has a grant or contract, the parent will select the provider, to the extent practicable. If a parent chooses to use a certificate, the Lead Agency shall provide information to the parent on the range of provider options, including care by sectarian providers and relatives. Lead Agencies must require providers chosen by families to meet health and safety standards and has the option to require higher standards of quality. Lead agencies are reminded that any policies and procedures should not restrict parental access to any type of care or provider (e.g. center care, home care, in-home care, for-profit provider, non-profit provider or faith-based provider, etc.) (98.15 (a)(5)).

- 4.1.1 Describe the child care certificate, including when it is issued to parents (before or after the parent has selected a provider) and what information is included on the certificate (98.16 (q)).

**The child care certificate is issued at the point of approval and for any change during the certification period. The certificate includes information regarding eligibility period, children awarded, co-payments, care levels and unit of care.**

- 4.1.2 Describe how the parent is informed that the child certificate allows the option to choose from a variety of child care categories, such as private, not-for-profit, faith-based providers; centers; FCC homes; or in-home providers (658E(c)(2)(A)(i); 658P(2); 658Q). Check all that apply.

☐ Certificate that provides information about the choice of providers

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- ☐ Certificate that provides information about the quality of providers
  - ☒ Certificate not linked to a specific provider, so parents can choose any provider
  - ☒ Consumer education materials on choosing child care
  - ☐ Referral to child care resource and referral agencies
  - ☒ Co-located resource and referral in eligibility offices
  - ☒ Verbal communication at the time of the application
  - ☐ Community outreach, workshops, or other in-person activities
  - ☐ Other. Describe:

4.1.3 Child care services available through grants or contracts.

a) In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency provide child care services through grants or contracts for child care slots (658A(b)(1))? *Note:* Do not check “yes” if every provider is simply required to sign an agreement to be paid in the certificate program.

- ☒ No. If no, skip to 4.1.4.
- ☐ Yes. If yes, describe:
  - How the Lead Agency ensures that parents who enroll with a provider who has a grant or contract have choices when selecting a provider:
  - The type(s) of child care services available through grants or contracts:
  - The entities that receive contracts (e.g., shared services alliances, CCR&R agencies, FCC networks, community-based agencies, child care providers):
  - The process for accessing grants or contracts:
  - How rates for contracted slots are set through grants and contracts:
  - How the Lead Agency determines which entities to contract with for increasing supply and/or improving quality:
  - If contracts are offered statewide and/or locally:

b) Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for child care services to increase the supply and/or quality of specific types of care? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Programs to serve children with disabilities
- ☐ Programs to serve infants and toddlers
- ☐ Programs to serve school-age children
- ☐ Programs to serve children needing non-traditional hour care
- ☐ Programs to serve homeless children
- ☐ Programs to serve children in underserved areas
- ☐ Programs that serve children with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds
- ☐ Programs that serve specific geographic areas
  - ☐ Urban
  - ☐ Rural

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4.1.4 Certify by describing the Lead Agency's procedures for ensuring that parents have unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds (658E(c)(2)(B); 98.16(t)).

**The provider's registration to participate in the Child Care Subsidy Program includes a certification that provider will allow the parent unlimited and unrestricted access to their children. This signed agreement is renewed with the provider annually.**

4.1.5 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care (i.e., care provided in the child's own home) but may limit its use (98.16(i)(2)). Will the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

☐ No.

☒ Yes. If checked, what limits will the Lead Agency set on the use of in-home care? Check all that apply.

☐ Restricted based on minimum the number of children in the care of the provider to meet the Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage) requirements. Describe:

☐ Restricted based on the provider meeting a minimum age requirement. (A relative provider must be at least 18 years of age based on the definition of eligible child care provider (98.2). Describe:

☐ Restricted based on the hours of care (i.e., certain number of hours, non-traditional work hours). Describe:

☐ Restricted to care by relatives. Describe:

☐ Restricted to care for children with special needs or a medical condition. Describe:

☐ Restricted to in-home providers that meet additional health and safety requirements beyond those required by CCDF. Describe:

☒ Other. Describe:

**The in-home care provider and parent must sign a statement certifying that they are meeting requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act.**

## 4.2 Assessing Market Rates and Child Care Costs

Lead Agencies have the option to conduct a statistically valid and reliable (1) market rate survey (MRS) reflecting variations in the price to parents of child care services by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child and/or (2) an alternative methodology, such as a cost estimation model (658E(c)(4)(B)). A cost estimation model estimates the cost of care by incorporating both data and assumptions to model what expected costs would be incurred by child care providers and parents under different cost scenarios. Another approach would be a cost study that collects cost data at the facility or program level to measure the costs (or inputs used) to deliver child care services. The MRS or alternative methodology must be developed and conducted no earlier than 2 years before the date of submission of the Plan.

**Note** – Any Lead Agency considering using an alternative methodology, instead of a market rate survey, is required to submit a description of its proposed approach to its ACF Regional Child

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Care Program Office for pre-approval in advance of the Plan submittal (see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/ccdf-acf-pi-2016-08>). Advance approval is not required if the Lead Agency plans to implement both a market rate survey and an alternative methodology. In its request for ACF pre-approval, a Lead Agency must:

- Provide an overview of the Lead Agency's proposed approach (e.g., cost estimation model, cost study/survey, etc.), including a description of data sources.
- Describe how the Lead Agency will consult with the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council or similar coordinating body, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, organizations representing child care caregivers, teachers and directors, and other appropriate entities prior to conducting the identified alternative methodology.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will use methods that are statistically valid and reliable and will yield accurate results. For example, if using a survey, describe how the Lead Agency will ensure a representative sample and promote an adequate response rate. If using a cost estimation model, describe how the Lead Agency will validate the assumptions in the model.
- If the proposed alternative methodology includes an analysis of costs (e.g., cost estimation model or cost study/survey), describe how the alternative methodology will account for key factors that impact the cost of providing care—such as: staff salaries and benefits, training and professional development, curricula and supplies, group size and ratios, enrollment levels, licensing requirements, quality level, facility size, and other factors.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will provide complete information that captures the universe of providers in the child care market.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will reflect variations by provider type, age of children, geographic location and quality.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will use current, up-to-date data.
- Describe the estimated reporting burden and cost to conduct the approach.

4.2.1 Please identify the methodology(ies) used below to assess child care prices and costs.


- ☒ MRS
- ☐ Alternative methodology. Describe:
- ☐ Both. Describe:

4.2.2 Prior to developing and conducting the MRS or alternative methodology, the Lead Agency is required to consult with the (1) State Advisory Council or other state- or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities and (2) organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors prior to developing and conducting the MRS or alternative methodology.

Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the:

- a) State Advisory Council or other state-designated cross-agency body:
- b) Local child care program administrators:
- c) Local child care resource and referral agencies:

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d) Organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors: 

e) Other. Describe:

**The Child Care Coordinating Committee includes representation from the states Tribal agency, center and family home providers, local quality enhancement agency representative that provide child care resource and referral services, 4-year and community college representatives, Public Health, Early Intervention, provider associations, family advocacy groups, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education which houses the State Advisory Council operating as the Children's Policy Council. The committee advised the lead agency on the length of the survey, the structuring of rate questions questions reflected general rate setting procedures of Alabama providers, the method of notifying providers using electronic as well as mail notification, allowing providers to complete the survey electronically as well as through the mail. The Committee stressed the need for follow-up contact with providers that did not complete the survey after the initial contact.**

4.2.3 Describe how the market rate survey is statistically valid and reliable. To be considered valid and reliable, the MRS must represent the child care market, provide complete and current data, use rigorous data collection procedures, reflect geographic variations, and analyze data in a manner that captures other relevant differences. For example, market rate surveys can use administrative data, such as child care resource and referral data, if they are representative of the market. If an alternative methodology, such as cost modeling, is used, demonstrate that the methodology used reliable methods.

**The Market Rate survey questionnaire was developed in collaboration with Auburn Montgomery University/Summas Source for use in collecting 2017 market rate data from the state's 3,042 formal child care providers. Minor modifications were made to the questionnaire from the one used in the market rate survey conducted in 2014. Consequently, pre-testing of the data collection instrument was limited to internal review by the survey consultants, as previous assessments had confirmed the validity of the questionnaire. The modifications were to add a separate question for entering monthly rates based on the ages of children served in the categories of Infant/Toddler, Preschool and School Age. A text box was added to allow providers to give further explanation of the published rates. The final addition was to survey awareness and participation in the Lead Agency's quality rating system. The questionnaire was designed to supply all information that was critical to evaluating the current cost of child care across the state for various categories of providers, but at the same time, it needed to be concise enough so that it would not seriously impact the time constraints or patience of those completing the questionnaires.**

**The Lead Agency maintains a database that includes information on family and group daycare homes, licensed centers and exempt from licensure facilities. A mailing list of all 3,042 facilities appearing on this database was prepared and a paper copy of the questionnaire was mailed to each facility.**

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The first wave of the survey was sent out on September 1, 2016. The questionnaire was accompanied by a return envelope that was self-addressed and stamped, along with a message from the Commissioner of the lead agency urging providers to complete the survey and stressing the importance of a timely response. Potential respondents were also given an option to complete the market rate survey online by visiting the lead agency website. Informational notices about the survey were sent to all Child Care Management Agencies and Quality Enhancement Agencies to improve the survey response rate.

A second wave of the survey was sent out on January 5, 2017. The multiple wave research design was intended to maximize the number of providers completing the questionnaire. Data from the questionnaires received by mail were entered into an online system similar to the one that was used for online surveys. The data were then downloaded into an excel spreadsheet for cleaning and appropriate coding. The final data were analyzed using the SAS software.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the type of child care facility that they operated (day care center, family day care home, group day care home, etc.) and the weekly and monthly charges for their child care services. Types of child care facilities were further classified into licensed and exempt facilities. The methodology resulted in a 60% return rate.

4.2.4 Describe how the market rate survey or alternative methodology reflects variations in the price or cost of child care services by:

a) Geographic area (e.g., statewide or local markets). Describe:

**The market rate survey reflected variations in care price by region and statewide.**

b) Type of provider. Describe:

**The provider types included in the survey were licensed and exempt child care center program and licensed family day care homes and group day care homes.**

c) Age of child. Describe:

**Rates were obtained by care level (infant/toddler, preschool and school-aged care).**

d) Describe any other key variations examined by the market rate survey or alternative methodology, such as quality level.

**The survey examined variations by licensed and licensed exempt providers statewide and regionally.**

4.2.5 After conducting the market rate survey or alternative methodology, the Lead Agency must prepare a detailed report containing the results of the MRS or alternative methodology. The detailed report must also include the estimated cost of care (including any relevant variation by geographic location, category of provider, or age of child) necessary to support (1) child care providers' implementation of the health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements and (2) higher quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a quality rating and improvement system or other system of quality indicators, at each level of quality. The Lead Agency must make the report with these results widely available no later than 30 days after

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completion of the report, including posting the results on the Lead Agency website. The Lead Agency must describe in the detailed report how the Lead Agency took into consideration the views and comments of the public.

Describe how the Lead Agency made the results of the market rate survey or alternative methodology report widely available to the public (98.45(f)(1)).

**The results of the MRS are posted to the lead agency's website.**

- a) Date of completion of the market rate survey or alternative methodology (must be no earlier than July 1, 2016, and no later than July 1, 2018).

**September 2017**

- b) Date the report containing results was made widely available—no later than 30 days after the completion of the report.

**October 2017**

- c) Describe how the Lead Agency made the detailed report containing results widely available and provide the link where the report is posted.

**The summary of the results of the report was shared with lead agency advisory groups, at meetings and at conferences. The report is posted on the lead agency website.**

[www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov)

- d) Describe how the Lead Agency considered stakeholder views and comments in the detailed report.

**Stakeholders advised the lead agency on the length of the survey, the structuring of rate questions reflected general rate setting procedures of Alabama providers, and the method of notifying providers using electronic as well as mail notification to allow for greater participation by child care providers. Stakeholders also advised that alternate methods of completing the survey should be allowed; therefore providers were allowed to complete the survey electronically as well as through the mail. The Committee stressed the need for follow-up contact with providers that did not complete the survey after the initial contact. A second contact wave was conducted after the initial survey return date.**

#### **4.3 Setting Payment Rates**

The Lead Agency must set CCDF subsidy payment rates, in accordance with the results of the current MRS or alternative methodology, at a level to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services that are comparable with those provided to families not receiving CCDF funds. The Lead Agency must re-evaluate its payment rates *at least* every 3 years.

4.3.1 Provide the base payment rates and percentiles (based on the most recent MRS) for the following categories below. If the Lead Agency conducted an MRS (only or in combination with an alternative methodology), also report the percentiles based on the most recent MRS. The ages and types of care listed below are meant to provide a snapshot of the categories on which rates can be based and are not intended to be comprehensive of all categories that might exist or to reflect the terms used by the Lead Agency for particular ages. Please use the most populous geographic region (area serving highest number of CCDF children).

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- a) Infant (6 months), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region  
Rate **\$118 per week** unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)  
Percentile of most recent MRS: **33<sup>rd</sup> percentile**
- b) Infant (6 months), full-time licensed FCC home in the most populous geographic region  
Rate **\$100 per week** unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)  
Percentile of most recent MRS: **38<sup>th</sup> percentile**
- c) Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region  
Rate **\$118 per week** unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)  
Percentile of most recent MRS: **33<sup>rd</sup> percentile**
- d) Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region  
**\$100 per week** unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)  
Percentile of most recent MRS: **38<sup>th</sup> percentile**
- e) Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region  
Rate **\$108 per week** unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)  
Percentile of most recent MRS: **27<sup>th</sup> percentile**
- f) Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region  
Rate **\$95 per week** unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)  
Percentile of most recent MRS: **28<sup>th</sup> percentile**
- g) School-age child (6 years), full-time licensed center care in most populous geographic region  
Rate **\$100 per week** unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)  
Percentile of most recent MRS: **38<sup>th</sup> percentile**
- h) School-age child (6 years), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region  
Rate **\$91 per week** unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)  
Percentile of most recent MRS: **34<sup>th</sup> percentile**
- i) Describe how part-time and full-time care were defined and calculated.  
**Full-time care is care provided more than 25 hours per week. Part-time care is less than 25 hours per week. Part-time care is calculated at half the full time rate.**
- j) Provide the effective date of the current payment rates (i.e., date of last update based on most recent MRS).  
**The above rates became effective August 2016, prior to the results of the most recent market rate survey. The lead agency is reviewing the current rates in relation to the current market rate survey to implement adjustments on or before October 1, 2018.**
- k) Provide the citation or link, if available, to the payment rates.
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The following link is to the current rates effective for August 2016.

[http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Care\\_Services/documents/ProviderRatesAugust2016.pdf](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Care_Services/documents/ProviderRatesAugust2016.pdf)

- l) If the payment rates are not set by the Lead Agency for the entire state/territory, describe how many jurisdictions set their own payment rates (98.16(i)(3)).

**Payment rates are set by the Lead Agency.**

4.3.2 Lead Agencies can choose to establish tiered rates, differential rates, or add-ons on top of their base rates as a way to increase payment rates for targeted needs (i.e., a higher rate for special needs children as both an incentive for providers to serve children with special needs and as a way to cover the higher costs to the provider to provide care for special needs children).

Check and describe the types of tiered reimbursement or differential rates, if any, the Lead Agency has chosen to implement. In the description of any tiered rates or add-ons, at a minimum, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates, including if the rates were based on the MRS and/or an alternative methodology, and the amount of the rate. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Differential rate for *non-traditional hours*. Describe:
- ☐ Differential rate for *children with special needs*, as defined by the state/territory. Describe:
- ☐ Differential rate for *infants and toddlers*. Describe:
- ☐ Differential rate for *school-age programs*. Describe:
- ☒ Differential rate for *higher quality*, as defined by the state/territory. Describe:  
**Higher quality rates are set at 2% above the base rate, beginning at Quality STAR level one and progresses to 10% above the base rate at Quality STAR level five. Each star rating is raised 2% at each increment.**
- ☒ Other differential rates or tiered rates. Describe:  
**Care exceeding 50 hours or more per week are paid at 125% of the base rate.**
- ☐ Tiered or differential rates are not implemented.

#### 4.4 Summary of Facts Used To Determine That Payment Rates Are Sufficient To Ensure Equal Access

Lead Agencies must certify that CCDF payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services comparable to those provided by families not receiving CCDF assistance (98.16(a)). Certify that payment rates reported in 4.3.1 are sufficient to ensure equal access by providing the following summary of facts (98.45(b)):

- a) Describe how a choice of the full range of providers pursuant to 98.30(e)(1) is made available; the extent to which child care providers participate in the CCDF system; and any barriers to participation, including barriers related to payment rates and practices  
**The caseworker gives an explanation of the certificate process at initial application and whenever the parent requests to change providers. Also information is found on the Parent Agreement and the Parental Choice form that is provided at each eligibility**

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determination. The parental choice form is issued when the parent notifies the case manager of a change in providers.

A Parent Pre-Certificate of Child Care – Shopping Care is issued to parents who have not chosen a provider at the time care is awarded. The pre-certificate allows the parent to choose from among all legally operating providers. The parent is allowed up to 10 days to make a choice of provider. Additional time is granted on a case-by-case basis when requested by the parent.

Some Child Care Management Agencies are also the agency for Quality Enhancement services thereby allowing parents access to full resource and referral and eligibility services in one location.

- b) Describe how payment rates are adequate and have been established based on the most recent MRS or alternative methodology

**Current rates percentile are reflective of the 2014 Market Rate Survey results. Rates will be adjusted on or before October 1, 2018 to be reflective of the results of the FY2017 market rate survey.**

- c) Describe how base payment rates enable providers to meet health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements under CCDF

**The lead agency proposing to increase the base rate to be more reflective of the rates charged by providers as reported in the FY2017 market rate survey. Current rates are within \$9 - \$40 of the average rate charged by providers, by geographic location.**

- d) Describe how the Lead Agency took the cost of higher quality into account, including how payment rates for higher-quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a QRIS or other system of quality indicators, relate to the estimated cost of care at each level of quality

**The lead agency will provide tiered payment allowing for payment rates above the base rate for programs operating at each Alabama Quality STARS levels. Tiered reimbursement rate increases at each higher level of quality.**

- e) How co-payments based on a sliding fee scale reported in 3.4.1 are affordable (response provided in 3.4.6)

**Copayments are set such that parent investment is at or below 7% of total income per child.**

- f) Describe how Lead Agencies' payment practices described in 4.5 support equal access to a range of providers

**Parents may select from all legally operating provider settings. The difference between the lead agency payment rates and the average rates charged by providers varies from \$9 to \$40 based on the geographical regions where care is provided. The lead agency proposes to set rates in FY2019 such that reimbursements is at the same percentile regardless of the type of provider or the geographical location of the child care provider thereby supporting access to the range of providers.**

- g) Describe how and on what factors the Lead Agency differentiates payment rates. Check all that apply.

☒ Geographic area. Describe:

**The rates reflect variation in price of care by region.**

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☒ Type of provider. Describe:

**The provider rates are set according to market rate data from type of provider setting - child care center program and licensed family day care homes and group day care homes.**

☒ Age of child. Describe:

**Rates are set based on the care level of the child, reflecting the market difference between rates charged at different care levels (Infant/toddler, preschool and school-age care).**

☒ Quality level. Describe:

**Tiered reimbursement rates are based on Alabama Quality STAR level. Rates increase at each STAR level.**

☐ Other.

h) Describe any additional facts that the Lead Agency considered in determining its payment rates to ensure equal access:

☐ Payment rates are set at the 75th percentile or higher of the most recent survey.

Describe:

☐ Feedback from parents, including parent surveys or parental complaints. Describe:

☐ Other. Describe:

#### **4.5 Payment Practices and the Timeliness of Payments**

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate that they have established payment practices applicable to all CCDF child care providers that include ensuring the timeliness of payments by either (1) paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services or (2) paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services. To the extent practicable, the Lead Agency must also support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by (1) paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance, (2) providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time, (3) providing full payment if a child is absent for 5 or fewer days in a month, or (4) using an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency provides a justification in its Plan (658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(I)(2)).

Lead Agencies are required to use CCDF payment practices that reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers who serve children who do not receive CCDF-funded assistance. Unless a Lead Agency is able to demonstrate that the following policies are not generally accepted in its particular state, territory, or service area or among particular categories or types of providers, Lead Agencies must (1) pay providers based on established part-time or full-time rates rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time and (2) pay for reasonable, mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents (658E(c)(2)(S); 98.45(I)(3)).

In addition, there are certain other generally accepted payment practices that are required. Lead Agencies are required to ensure that child care providers receive payment for any services in accordance with a payment agreement or an authorization for services, ensure that child care

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providers receive prompt notice of changes to a family's eligibility status that could impact payment, and establish timely appeal and resolution processes for any payment inaccuracies and disputes (98.45(l)(4) through (6); 658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(l)(4); 98.45(l)(5); 98.45(l)(6)).

4.5.1 Certify by describing the payment practices that the Lead Agency has implemented for all CCDF child care providers,

a) Ensure the timeliness of payments by either (Lead Agency to implement at least one of the following):

- ☐ Paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services. If implemented describe the policy or procedure.
- ☒ Paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services. If implemented describe the policy or procedure.

**Providers do not submit a bill for services. Parents record attendance using a swipe card. The attendance for the week is captured in the Time and Attendance System database and payment is calculated based on the child's authorization information. Direct Deposit is made to child care providers bank account within 21 days of the week child care services was provided. Child care providers receive weekly direct deposits.**

b) To the extent practicable, support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by:

- ☐ Paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance. If implemented describe the policy or procedure.
- ☐ Providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time. If implemented describe the policy or procedure.
- ☒ Providing full payment if a child is absent for 5 or fewer days in a month. If implemented describe the policy or procedure.

**Payment is authorized for up to 5 absences, whether or not consecutive, within a month. Payment is authorized for up to 10 absences due to the illness of the child when documented by a statement from a licensed physician, psychiatrist or psychologist.**

- ☐ Use an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency provides a justification in its Plan. If chosen, please describe the policy or procedure and the Lead Agency's justification for this approach.

c) Reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers who serve children who do not receive CCDF subsidies, which must include the following two practices unless the Lead Agency provides evidence that such practices are not generally accepted in its state (658E(c)(2)(S); 98.45(l)(3)).

- ☒ Paying on a part-time or full-time basis (rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time). Describe the policy or procedure and include a definition of the time increments (e.g., part time, full-time).

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**Full-time payment is authorized when the parent is participating in an activity for more than 25 hours per week. Part-time payment authorized when the parent is participating in an activity for 25 hours or less each week.**

- ☐ Paying for reasonable mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents. Describe the policy or procedure.

- d) The Lead Agency ensures that providers are paid in accordance with a written payment agreement or an authorization for services that includes, at a minimum, information regarding provider payment policies, including rates, schedules, any fees charged to providers, and the dispute-resolution process. Describe:

**Upon registration provider agreements are signed by the provider to inform them of payments and applicable rates as assigned per child care type and care level. Providers are paid in accordance with the payment schedule set forth by the attendance of the child.**

- e) The Lead Agency provides prompt notice to providers regarding any changes to the family's eligibility status that could impact payments, and such a notice is sent no later than the day that the Lead Agency becomes aware that such a change will occur. Describe: A **Communication Notice is sent to notify providers of changes in eligibility that impacts payment. Notices are sent to providers in the same timeframe that notices are sent to parents - within 10 days of the effective date of the action.**
- f) The Lead Agency has a timely appeal and resolution process for payment inaccuracies and disputes. Describe:

**Providers may request a review of payment and adjustment for inaccuracies in payment up to 30 days after the direct deposit date. A request for review is submitted to the lead agency for review by a payment Adjustment Analyst.**

4.5.2 Co payment practices vary across regions, counties, and/or geographic areas?

☒ No, the practices do not vary across areas.

☐ Yes, the practices vary across areas. Describe:  

#### 4.6 Supply-Building Strategies To Meet the Needs of Certain Populations

Lead Agencies are required to develop and implement strategies to increase the supply of and to improve the quality of child care services for children in underserved areas; infants and toddlers; children with disabilities, as defined by the Lead Agency; and children who receive care during non-traditional hours (658 E(c)(2)(M); 98.16 (x)).

4.6.1 For each of the following types of providers, identify any shortages in the supply of quality child care providers, the data sources used to identify shortages, and the method of tracking progress to support equal access and parental choice.

- a) Children in underserved areas:

**Licensing data indicates a decline in the number of licensed family child care (FCC) homes. FCC is the primary means for providing care in underserved areas and in particular rural areas.**

- b) Infants and toddlers:

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**Infant and toddler care Licensing capacity numbers indicate a decline in the number of available infant/toddler slots.**

- c) Children with disabilities (include the Lead Agency definition in the description):

**Licensing capacity numbers indicate a decline in the availability of care that targets the needs for children with disabilities.**

- d) Children who received care during non-traditional hours:

**Information from Economic Development agencies and towns and municipalities inform the lead agency of discrepancies in the amount of care available for employees working non-traditional hours.**

- e) Other. Please describe any other shortages in the supply of high-quality providers.

4.6.2 Based on the analysis in 4.6.1, describe what method(s) is used to increase supply and to improve quality for the following.

- a) Infants and toddlers. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☒ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☒ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2)
- ☐ Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, shared services, and leveraging
- ☐ Other. Describe:

- b) Children with disabilities. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☒ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2)
- ☐ Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, shared services, and leveraging
- ☐ Other. Describe:

- c) Children who receive care during non-traditional hours. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☒ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers

- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2)
- ☐ Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, shared services, and leveraging
- ☐ Other. Describe:

d) Other. Check and describe:

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3). Describe:
- ☐ Family child care networks. Describe:
- ☐ Start-up funding. Describe:
- ☐ Technical assistance support. Describe:
- ☐ Recruitment of providers. Describe:
- ☒ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2)  
**Tiered rate for centers at each level of Alabama Quality STAR level.**
- ☐ Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, shared services, and leveraging. Describe:
- ☐ Other. Describe:

4.6.3 Lead Agencies must prioritize investments for increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and do not currently have sufficient numbers of such programs.

a) How does the Lead Agency define areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment?

**An area with significant concentration of poverty and unemployment is defined as areas where the percent of persons in poverty is higher than the Alabama average. In Alabama, that includes 36 of the 67 counties.**

b) Describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and that do not have high-quality programs.

**Areas with high concentrations of poverty and unemployment have difficulty sustaining high quality child care services due to cost and parent ability to pay. The lead agency is proposing to increase the provider rates for all categories and types of providers to encourage more providers to participate in the Child Care Subsidy program. The CCDF Lead Agency will increase child care assistance rates to licensed providers and providers with an Alabama Quality STARS at each Quality STAR rating level. The lead agency has implemented Early Head Start - ChildCare Partnership (EHS-CCP) program in areas with high poverty and unemployment areas. The program operates in 29 counties. Twenty-two of the 29 counties are rural counties. Parents participating in the EHS-CCP programs receive priority for subsidized child care services.**

## 5 Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings

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Lead Agencies are required to certify that there are in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services in the state/territory. States and territories may allow licensing exemptions, but they must describe how such exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of CCDF children in license-exempt care. Lead Agencies also must certify that there are in effect health and safety requirements applicable to providers serving CCDF children. These health and safety requirements must be appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served, must include specific topics and training on those topics, and are subject to monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that providers are complying with the health and safety requirements.

This section covers licensing requirements, health and safety requirements and training, and monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that child care providers comply with licensing and health and safety requirements (98.16(n)) as well as exemptions (98.16(l)). This section also addresses group size limits; child-staff ratios; and required qualifications for caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.16(m)). Criminal background check requirements are included in this section (98.16(o)).

## **5.1 Licensing Requirements**

Each state/territory must certify it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to all child care services provided within the state/territory (not restricted to providers receiving CCDF funds) and provide a detailed description of these requirements and how the requirements are effectively enforced (658E(c)(2)(F)). If any types of CCDF providers are exempt from licensing requirements, the state/territory must describe those exemptions and describe how these exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, or development of children. The descriptions must also include any exemptions based on provider category, type, or setting; length of day; and providers not subject to licensing because the number of children served falls below a Lead Agency-defined threshold and any other exemption to licensing requirements (658E(c)(2)(F); 98.16(u); 98.409(a)(2)(iv)).

**5.1.1** To certify, describe the licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided within the state/territory and note if providers are exempted from licensing requirements and how such exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children (658E(c)(2)(F); 98.40(a)(2)).

**The following programs are exempt from licensing: Kindergartens or nursery schools or other daytime programs operated by public elementary systems or secondary level school units or institutions of higher learning. Kindergartens or nursery schools or other daytime programs, with or without stated educational purposes, operating no more than four hours a day and receiving children younger than lawful school age. Kindergartens or nursery schools or other daytime programs operated as a part of a private school and receiving children younger than lawful school age for four hours a day or less, with or without stated educational purposes. Facilities operated for more than four hours a day in connection with a shopping center or service or other similar facility, where transient children are cared for temporarily while parents or custodians of the children are occupied on the premises or are in the immediate vicinity and readily available. The facilities shall meet local and state fire and health requirements. Any type of day care center that is conducted on federal government premises. Special activities programs for children of lawful school age including, but not limited to,**

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athletics, crafts instruction and similar activities conducted on an organized and periodic basis by civic, charitable and governmental organizations provided local and state fire and health requirements are met. Preschool programs which are an integral part of a local church ministry or a religious nonprofit elementary school, and are so recognized in the church or school's documents. For all providers participating in CCDF facilities are monitored annually for Health and Safety. All complaints involving Health and Safety issues are investigated by a Child Care Consultant. For any other church exempt program that is not participating in the subsidy program, complaints are recorded and forward to their appropriate District Attorney.

5.1.2 Which providers in your state/territory are subject to licensing under this CCDF category? Check all that apply and provide a citation to the licensing rule.

☒ Center-based child care. Provide a citation:

**A child care facility that receives more than 12 children for more than four hours a day with or without stated educational purposes.**

☒ Family child care. Provide a citation:

**Group Home-A child care facility which is a family home and which receives at least seven but no more than twelve children for care during part of the day and at least two adults are present.**

**Family Day Care Home- A child care facility which is a family home and which receives no more than six children for care during the day.**

☐ In-home care. Provide a citation:  

5.1.3 Are any providers in your state/territory that fall under this CCDF category exempt from licensing (98.40(2)(i) through (iv))? If so, describe exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption.

☒ Center-based child care. If checked, describe the exemptions.

**Kindergartens or nursery schools or other daytime programs operated by public elementary systems or secondary level school units or institutions of higher learning. Kindergartens or nursery schools or other daytime programs, with or without stated educational purposes, operating no more than four hours a day and receiving children younger than lawful school age. Kindergartens or nursery schools or other daytime programs operated as a part of a private school and receiving children younger than lawful school age for four hours a day or less, with or without stated educational purposes. Facilities operated for more than four hours a day in connection with a shopping center or service or other similar facility, where transient children are cared for temporarily while parents or custodians of the children are occupied on the premises or are in the immediate vicinity and readily available. The facilities shall meet local and state fire and health requirements. Any type of day care center that is conducted on federal government premises. Special activities programs for children of lawful school age including, but not limited to, athletics, crafts instruction and similar activities conducted on an organized and periodic basis by civic, charitable and governmental organizations provided local and state fire and health requirements are met. Preschool programs which**

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**are an integral part of a local church ministry or a religious nonprofit elementary school, and are so recognized in the church or school's documents.**

☐ Family child care. If checked, describe the exemptions.  

☒ In-home care. If checked, describe the exemptions.

**Relative providers that care for children in the child's own home are exempt from licensure.**

5.1.4 Describe how any exemptions identified above do not endanger the health, safety, or development of children in:

a) Center-based child care if checked in 5.1.3.

**All providers participating in CCDF are monitored annually for Health and Safety. All complaints involving Health and Safety issues are investigated by a Child Care Consultant. For any other church exempt program that is not participating in the subsidy program, complaints are recorded and forwarded to their appropriate District Attorney. These providers must certify they have had clearance by their local fire, zoning and health departments.**

b) Family child care if checked in 5.1.3.  

c) In-home care if checked in 5.1.3.

**Providers exempt in this category are relatives providing care to the child in the child's own home. Providers in this category are eligible to participate in training through the lead agency Kids and Kin Relative Child Care initiative. The initiative provides training, technical assistance, and supports to providers to**

## **5.2 Health and Safety Standards and Requirements for CCDF Providers**

5.2.1 Standards on ratios, group sizes, and qualifications for CCDF providers.

Lead Agencies are required to establish child care standards for providers receiving CCDF funds, appropriate to the type of child care setting involved, that address appropriate ratios between the number of children and number of providers in terms of the age of the children, group size limits for specific age populations, and the required qualifications for providers (658E(c)(2)(H); 98.41(d); 98.16(m)). For ease of responding, this section is organized by CCDF categories of care, licensing status, and age categories.

a) Licensed CCDF center-based care

1. Infant

- How does the State/territory define infant (age range):  
**The State Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care defines infant as birth to 18 months**
- Ratio:  
**1:5**
- Group size:

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Group size is determined by all of the following categories: size of the room, age of the child, and available equipment per room. If any of these numbers vary the lowest calculated number will determine the group size.

- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:  
A teacher must be 19 years of age, have a high school diploma or GED, and have 12 hours of training within 30 days as well as the required CCDF training topics within 90 days. In addition, teachers must have the required comprehensive background check every 5 years.

2. Toddler

- How does the State/territory define toddler (age range):  
The State Minimum Standards for licensed child care defines toddler as age 18 months to 30 months.
- Ratio:  
The State Minimum Standards ratio for toddlers is 1:7 for age 18 months to 30 months and 1:8 for age 24 months to 36 months.
- Group size:  
Group size is determined by all of the following categories: size of the room, age of the child, and available equipment per room. If any of these numbers vary, the lowest calculated number will determine the group size.
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:  
A teacher must be 19 years of age, have a high school diploma or GED, and have 12 hours of training within 30 days as well as the required CCDF training topics within 90 days. In addition, teachers must have the required comprehensive background check completed every 5 years.

3. Preschool

- How does the State/territory define preschool (age range):  
The State Minimum Standards for licensed child care defines Preschool as age 30 months to school-age.
- Ratio:  
The state Minimum Standards ratio for preschool is 1:11 for age 30 months to 4 years and 1:18 for age 4 years to school-age.
- Group size:  
Group size is determined by all of the following categories: size of the room, age of the child, and available equipment per room. If any of these numbers vary, the lowest calculated number will determine the group size.
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:  
A teacher must be 19 years of age, have a high school diploma or GED, and have 12 hours of training within 30 days as well as the required CCDF training topics within 90 days. In addition, teachers must have the required comprehensive background check completed every 5 years.

4. School-age

- How does the State/territory define school-age (age range):  
The State Minimum Standards for licensed child care defines school-age as children who are five years of age on or before September 1 (or the date on

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which school begins in the enrolling district pursuant to Code of Alabama 1975 Section 16-28-4) of a given year.

- Ratio:  
**The State Minimum Standards ratio for school-age is 1:21 for school-age up to 8 years and 1:22 for age 8 years and older.**
- Group size:  
**Group size is determined by all of the following categories: size of the room, age of the child, and available equipment per room. If any of these numbers vary, the lowest calculated number will determine the group size.**
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:  
**A teacher must be 19 years of age, have a high school diploma or GED, and have 12 hours of training within 30 days as well as the required CCDF training topics within 90 days. In addition, teachers must have the required comprehensive background check completed every 5 years.**

5. If any of the responses above are different for exempt child care centers, describe which requirements apply to exempt centers.

**The requirements are the same as above for all exempt programs participating in the child care subsidy program with the exception of the requirement of having 12 hours of Minimum Standards training within 30 days of employment.**

6. Describe, if applicable, ratios, group sizes, and qualifications for classrooms with mixed age groups.

**When children of different ages are grouped together (multiple age grouping), staff-child ratio shall be according to the age of the youngest child in the group if more than 20% of the children are in the youngest age category. If children in the youngest age category make up 20% or less of the group, staff-child ratio shall be according to the next highest age category.**

7. Describe the director qualifications for licensed CCDF center-based care.

**The center director shall have at least 20 clock hours of training in administration and management and at least four clock hours of training in quality child care. In addition, the director shall meet the minimum education qualification of a high school diploma or GED, 120 clock hours of training in child care and at least 12 months of experience as a childcare worker/teacher or as a director/program director in a licensed day care center or a Department approved setting.**

b) Licensed CCDF family child care provider

1. Infant

- How does the State/territory define infant (age range):  
**The State Minimum Standards for licensed child care homes defines infant as birth to 18 months.**
- Ratio:  
**The ratio for a family daycare home is 1:6 (there can be no more than three children younger than 12 months with one caregiver) and for a group daycare home the ratio is 2:12 (there can be no more than six children younger than 12 months with two caregivers).**

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- Group size:  
**Group size is determined by all of the following categories: size of the room used in the home, age of the child, and available equipment per age group. If any of these numbers vary, the lowest calculated number will determine the group size.**
  - Teacher/caregiver qualifications:  
**The caregiver shall have a high school diploma or GED and at least 24 hours of training in child development prior to initial licensing. For a group home an assistant caregiver is also needed. The assistant caregiver shall have a high school diploma or GED and at least 12 hours of training within the first 30 days of employment.**

## 2. Toddler

- How does the State/territory define toddler (age range):  
**The State Minimum Standards for licensed child care homes defines toddler as 18 months to 36 months.**
- Ratio:  
**The ratio for a family daycare home is 1:6 and for a group daycare home the ratio is 2:12.**
- Group size:  
**Group size is determined by all of the following categories: size of the room used in the home, age of the child, and available equipment per age group. If any of these numbers vary, the lowest calculated number will determine the group size.**
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:  
**The caregiver shall have a high school diploma or GED and at least 24 hours of training in child development prior to initial licensing. For a group home an assistant caregiver is also needed. The assistant caregiver shall have a high school diploma or GED and at least 12 hours of training within the first 30 days of employment.**

## 3. Preschool

- How does the State/territory define preschool (age range):  
**The State Minimum Standards for licensed child care homes defines preschool as 30 months to school-age.**
- Ratio:  
**The ratio for a family daycare home is 1:6 and for a group daycare home the ratio is 2:12.**
- Group size:  
**Group size is determined by all of the following categories: size of the room used in the home, age of the child, and available equipment per age group. If any of these numbers vary, the lowest calculated number will determine the group size.**
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:  
**The caregiver shall have a high school diploma or GED and at least 24 hours of training in child development prior to initial licensing. For a group home an assistant caregiver is also needed. The assistant caregiver shall have a high school diploma or GED and at least 12 hours of training within the first 30 days of employment.**

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4. School-age
- How does the State/territory define school-age (age range):  
**The State Minimum Standards for licensed child care defines school-age as children who are five years of age on or before September 1 (or the date on which school begins in the enrolling district pursuant to Code of Alabama 1975 Section 16-28-4) of a given year.**
  - Ratio:  
**The ratio for a family daycare home is 1:6 and for a group daycare home the ratio is 2:12**
  - Group size:  
**Group size is determined by all of the following categories: size of the room used in the home, age of the child, and available equipment per age group. If any of these numbers vary, the lowest calculated number will determine the group size.**
  - Teacher/caregiver qualifications:  
**The caregiver shall have a high school diploma or GED and at least 24 hours of training in child development prior to initial licensing. For a group home an assistant caregiver is also needed. The assistant caregiver shall have a high school diploma or GED and at least 12 hours of training within the first 30 days of employment.**
5. If any of the responses above are different for exempt family child care homes, please describe which requirements apply to exempt homes.  
**The Lead Agency does not have any exempt home child care providers.**
- c) In-home CCDF providers:
1. Describe the ratios.  
**There are no ratios for in-home providers**
  2. Describe the group size.  
**There are no group sizes for in-home providers**
  3. Describe the threshold for when licensing is required.  
**Licensing is not required for in-home providers.**
  4. Describe the maximum number of children that are allowed in the home at any one time.  
**Not applicable.**
  5. Describe if the state/territory requires related children to be included in the child-to-provider ratio or group size.  
**The state does not have any requirements for ratio and group size for in-home providers.**
  6. Describe any limits on infants and toddlers or additional school-age children that are allowed for part of the day.
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**The state has no limits imposed on in-home providers.**

**5.2.2 Health and safety standards for CCDF providers.**

States and territories must establish health and safety standards for programs (e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, etc.) serving children receiving CCDF assistance relating to the topics listed below, as appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served (98.41(a)). This requirement is applicable to all child care providers receiving CCDF funds regardless of licensing status (i.e., licensed or license-exempt). The only exception to this requirement is for providers who are caring for their own relatives because Lead Agencies have the option of exempting relatives from some or all CCDF health and safety requirements (98.42(c)).

To certify, describe how the following health and safety standards for programs serving children receiving CCDF assistance are defined and established on the required topics (98.16(l)). Note – This question is different from the health and safety training requirements, which are addressed in question 5.2.3.

**1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunization)**

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program**  
**Reference is found under the section of Indoor Area pertaining to the section that facilities shall be clean. Second, it can be found in the Infant/Toddler Daily Program under the section Diapering and Toileting, and under Face and Handwashing. Third, it is found under the Preschool Daily Program section titled Face and Handwashing. Fourth, it is found under the Health Information section for the area covering Illness and Injury, Isolation and Removal, as well as the section labeled Contagious Diseases/Conditions. Fifth, it is found in the section labeled Hygienic Practices which covers Face/Handwashing for children and staff and the proper way to maintain toilet articles.**
- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program, Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers, and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs participating in the child care subsidy program, and all family child care homes.**
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**The requirements for the infants and toddlers are more specific in regards to the diapering and toileting requirements. The Preschool/School-Age requirements**

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**for Hygienic Practices are found under Face and Handwashing. All other requirements as stated above are the same for all age groups.**

- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**
2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in Health and Safety Guidelines under the Infant/Toddler Daily Program in the section Napping and Resting. This section addresses infants being placed on their backs to sleep, the use of positioning devices, and staff being present in the room. It is further defined under Cribs, Cots, and Bedding. This section addresses the space requirement between cribs, the fitting of crib sheets, no soft materials being in the sleeping environment, and no soft surfaces being used for sleeping.**
  - List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program, Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers, and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
  - Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**Safe Sleep Practices are the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care providers. There are no standards for in-home care.**
  - Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**There are specific requirements for infants under 12 months pertaining to back to sleep, sheets fitting snugly, and eliminating soft materials from the sleeping environment.**
  - Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement however documentation is provided to them at registration on safe sleep practices.**
3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in the Child Care Program under the title Health Information. This section covers the administering of medicine with written parental consent, the labeling of prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications. Also, it covers the directions for administering the medication, who administers the medicine, the storage of medication under lock and key as well as returning medication when no longer needed.**

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- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program, Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers, and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
  - Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes.**
  - Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**There are no variations based on the age of the child.**
  - Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**
4. Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in the Child Care Program under the Infant/Toddler Daily Requirements in the section labeled Feeding. This section notes the following when a facility provides food: it must be planned with a parent/guardian or physician with parent's knowledge and consent, the handling and storage of formula as well as the bottles, the labeling of bottles and food provided by parent, what cannot be served to young children as well as how food should be prepared to prevent choking. Also, it is found in the Preschool/School-Age Daily Program under the section titled Feeding. This section covers food requirements, children with special dietary needs along with requiring written instructions from the child's parent or physician, the posting of menus in advance, and what cannot be served to young children as well as how food should be prepared to prevent choking.**
  - List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
  - Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes.**
  - Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**There are no variations based on the age of the child.**

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- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**
5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards that can cause bodily injury, such as electrical hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in the Requirement section under Facilities in the section titled Hazard Prevention. This section covers the locking and labeling of hazardous substances and materials, no firearms or ammunition, hand railing for stairs, the marking of clear glass doors, the storage of medications and drugs, barriers around radiators, heaters, and fans, protective coverings on electrical outlets, consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs, and smoking being prohibited. In addition, it is covered under the section titled Outdoor Area and Swimming and Wading at the Facility. The outdoor section covers when concrete can be use under equipment, standing water on playground, hazardous conditions, and anchoring of equipment. The next section defines swimming for pools two feet or more in depth and wading structures less than two feet in depth by addressing things as lifeguard requirements, ratios, fencing requirements, First Aid/CPR requirements, and the storage and use of wading structures. The requirements for transportation can be found in the Child Care Program under the title Transportation. This section covers transportation provided by the facility by addressing requirements such as the checklist for the loading/unloading of children, supervision of children in vehicles (including the counting of drivers and ratios in the vehicle), safety precaution in vehicles (including the locking of doors, airbag requirements, and the use of car restraint systems and seatbelts), and the requirement of a vehicle safety check on all facility vehicles. In addition, the section covers transportation provided by the parent or other designated persons by addressing the escorting of children into the facility, signing children in/out of the facility by parent or center staff, the releasing requirement for children, and when photo identification is needed for the releasing of children.**
  - List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
  - Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes (with the exception of the vehicle safety check in the family child care homes).**
  - Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.

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**Ratios for swimming, wading, and transportation will be based on the age of the child and the type of child restraint system will be based on the age of the child.**

- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**
6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment.
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in the Child Care Program under the section titled Infant/Toddler Daily Program. This section covers the handling of infants and toddlers gently, the supporting of an infant's head when lifting and holding, and the prohibiting of rough handling (including such things as shaking, lifting or jerking by one arm, pushing, restricting of movement, and the covering of a child's face or mouth). In addition, it is defined in the Child Care Program under the section titled Discipline. This section covers the requirements for discipline to age and developmental appropriateness, and disciplinary practices that are prohibited (such as corporal or physical punishment, verbal abuse, the use of discipline associated with food, naps or bathroom procedures, the use of physical restraint, punishment administered by another child, and prohibiting the use of rough or harsh handling).**
  - List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
  - Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes.**
  - Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**There are no variations based on the age of the child.**
  - Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**
7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event (such as violence at a child care facility), within the meaning of those terms under section 602(a)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5195a(a)(1)). Emergency preparedness and response planning (at the child care provider level) must also include procedures for evacuation; relocation; shelter-in-place and lockdown; staff and volunteer training and practice drills; communications and reunification with families;

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continuity of operations; and accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions.

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in the Child Care Program under the section titled Emergency Procedures. This section requires that procedures be established for emergency procedures as well as these procedures being posted in a conspicuous place.**
- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes.**
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**There are no variations based on the age of the children in care.**
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**

8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in the Requirements section under the title Hazards Prevention. This section covers all flammable, poisonous, and other hazardous substances and materials that shall be kept under lock and key or combination lock. All containers shall be labeled with the name of the substance or material it contains.**
- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).

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**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes.**

- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**There are no variations based on the age of the child.**
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**

9. Precautions in transporting children (if applicable)

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in the section of Transportation. This section covers transportation provided by the facility by addressing requirements such as the checklist for the loading/unloading of children, supervision of children in vehicles (including the counting of drivers and ratios in the vehicle), safety precaution in vehicles (including the locking of doors, airbag requirements, and the use of car restraint systems and seatbelts), and the requirement of a vehicle safety check on all facility vehicles. In addition, the section covers transportation provided by the parent or other designated persons by addressing the escorting of children into the facility, signing children in/out of the facility by parent or center staff, the releasing requirement for children, and when photo identification is needed for the releasing of children.**
- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes.**
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**Ratios for transportation will be based on the age of the child along with the type of child restraint system.**
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**

10. Pediatric first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**A current first aid certificate and a current infant/child (pediatric) and cardiopulmonary resuscitation certificate is required for all licensed centers and**

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**all family child care homes. Church exempt programs on subsidy are required to have current first aid and current cardiopulmonary resuscitation training.**

- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**Licensed centers and homes state that online First Aid and CPR are not acceptable and require First Aid/ CPR certification. Licensed centers and exempt programs on subsidy require at least one staff person with First Aid/CPR to be present at the facility during all hours of operation. All programs participating in subsidy are required to have First Aid/CPR training on all staff but not certification. The family and group day care homes require the caregiver, assistant caregiver, all substitutes to have First Aid and CPR certification.**
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.  
**There are no variations based on the age of the child.**
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**

#### 11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The requirement is defined in the section on Administration under Reports to the Department in the section titled Child Abuse Neglect Reports. This section covers who is required to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect, who the information is reported to, immunity for making such report, confidentiality of information, and cooperation during the investigation process.**
- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes.**
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.

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**There are no variations based on the age of the child.**

- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**

a) The Lead Agency may also include optional standards related to the following:

1. Nutrition

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The standard is defined in the Child Care Program in the sections of Infant/Toddler Daily Program and Preschool/School-Age Daily Program. The sections cover how many meals and snacks that should be served daily, meal and snacks components, and serving size components.**
- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Refer to the Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The requirement is the same for all licensed centers, church exempt programs on subsidy, and all family child care homes.**
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**

2. Access to physical activity

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**Alabama Quality STARS standard at STAR Level One states the provider must post a developmentally appropriate daily schedule in each classroom/program area, which includes a minimum of 60 minutes of vigorous active play.**
- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Alabama Quality STARS – QRIS, Center-based Guidelines**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**The standard applies to licensed center care providers**
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**The standard does not apply to relative care providers**

3. Caring for children with special needs

- 
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
  - List the citation for these requirements. [REDACTED]
  - Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt). [REDACTED]
  - Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement. [REDACTED]
4. Any other areas determined necessary to promote child development or to protect children's health and safety (98.44(b)(1)(iii)). Describe:  
**There are additional requirements that will aid in promoting child development.**

- Provide a brief summary of how the standard(s) is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)  
**The standard is found in the Minimum Standards and Health and Safety Guidelines, Child Care Program for Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and School-Agers. It is defined in the section for Learning and Growth Activities for Infants/Toddlers and includes things such as the use of the variety of toys, time outdoors daily, daily opportunities for freedom of movement outside of cribs, and staff talking to and encouraging response from infants/toddlers. In addition, it is defined in the section for Learning and Growth Activities for Preschool/School-Agers and includes things such as the posting of a daily schedule, a variety of indoor/outdoor experiences, encouraging conversations among children, giving individual attention to children daily, and encouraging the use of television and video- tapes only when they supplement and enhance the daily lesson plan.**
- List the citation for these requirements.  
**Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Day Care Homes for specific citations.**
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).  
**There are no variations for care in regards to all licensed centers. In family child care homes, the requirements address providing a variety toys and equipment based on the age and interest of the child and the previewing of videotapes for appropriateness. The only requirements for church exempt programs participating in subsidy pertains to infants and toddlers having freedom of movement outside of cribs and that no child can be required to watch television regardless of age.**
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.  
**Relative providers are exempt from this requirement.**

#### 5.2.3 Health and safety training for CCDF providers on required topics.

Lead Agencies are required to have minimum pre-service or orientation training requirements (to be completed within 3 months), as appropriate to the provider setting and the age of children served, that address the health and safety topics described in 5.2.2, and child

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development. Lead Agencies must also have ongoing training requirements on the health and safety topics for caregivers, teachers, and directors of children receiving CCDF funds (658E(c)(2)(I)(i); 98.44(b)(1)(iii)). The state/territory must describe its requirements for pre-service or orientation training and ongoing training. These trainings should be part of a broader systematic approach and progression of professional development (as described in section 6) within a state/territory. Lead Agencies have flexibility in determining the number of training hours to require, but they may consult with *Caring for our Children Basics* for best practices and the recommended time needed to address these training requirements.

### **Pre-Service or Orientation Training Requirements**

- a) Provide the minimum number of pre-service or orientation training hours on health and safety topics for caregivers, teachers, and directors required for the following:
1. Licensed child care centers:  
**Directors are required to have a minimum of 20 initial hours of training in Health/Safety and Universal Precautions, child care workers/teachers are required to have 2 hours of training in Health/Safety and Universal Precautions within 30 days of employment.**
  2. Licensed FCC homes:  
**The caregiver has to have 4 hours of initial training in Health/Safety and Universal Precautions, the assistant caregiver has to have 2 hours of initial training in Health/Safety and Universal Precautions within 30 days of employment.**
  3. In-home care:  
**In-home care providers are exempted from this requirement.**
  4. Variations for exempt provider settings:  
**Exempt providers participating in the child care subsidy program are required to have training hours in the required CCDF health and safety topics.**
- b) Provide the length of time that providers have to complete trainings subsequent to being hired (must be 3 months or fewer).
- 90 days**
- c) Identify below the pre-service or orientation training requirements for each topic (98.41(a)(1)(i through xi)).
1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations)

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

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☒ Yes

☐ No

2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No

3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No

4. Prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No

5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**

- 
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No
6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment
- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
  - Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No
7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event
- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
  - Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No
8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio contaminants
- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
  - Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No

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9. Appropriate precautions in transporting children (if applicable)

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No

10. Pediatric first aid and CPR certification

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No

11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No

12. Child development (98.44(b)(1)(iii))

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**This is addressed in the Minimum Standards for Childcare Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Daycare Homes (licensed providers only).**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☒ Yes  
☐ No

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13. Describe other requirements

- Provide the citation for other training requirements.  
**Minimum Standards for Childcare Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Daycare Homes.**
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic(s) be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?  
☐ Yes  
☒ No

**Ongoing Training Requirements**

5.2.4 Provide the minimum number of annual training hours on health and safety topics for caregivers, teachers, and directors required for the following.

a) Licensed child care centers:

**Directors have to obtain 4 hours of training in Health/Safety and Universal Precautions and teachers have to obtain 2 hours of training in Health/Safety and Universal Precautions.**

b) Licensed FCC homes:

**The caregiver has to have a minimum of 3 hours of training in Health/Safety and Universal Precautions and the assistant caregiver has to have 2 hours of training in Health/Safety and Universal Precautions.**

c) In-home care:

**In-home care providers are exempted from this requirement.**

d) Variations for exempt provider settings:

**Exempt providers participating in the child care subsidy program are required to have training hours in the required CCDF health and safety topics.**

5.2.5 Describe the ongoing health and safety training for CCDF providers by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).

1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations)

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

- 
- ☒ Annually.  
☐ Other. Describe

2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

- ☒ Annually.  
☐ Other. Describe

3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

- ☒ Annually.  
☐ Other. Describe

4. Prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

- ☒ Annually.  
☐ Other. Describe

5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines**

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**-Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☒ Annually.

☐ Other. Describe

6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☒ Annually.

☐ Other. Describe

7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☒ Annually.

☐ Other. Describe

8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☒ Annually.

☐ Other. Describe

9. Appropriate precautions in transporting children (if applicable)

- 
- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
  - How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?
    - ☒ Annually.
    - ☐ Other. Describe

10. Pediatric first aid and CPR certification

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?
  - ☒ Annually.
  - ☐ Other. Describe

11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?
  - ☒ Annually.
  - ☐ Other. Describe

12. Child development (98.44(b)(1)(iii))

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.  
**This is addressed in the Minimum Standards for Childcare Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Daycare Homes (licensed providers only).**
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?
  - ☒ Annually.
  - ☐ Other. Describe

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13. Describe other requirements.

**Quality Child Care and Licensing, Child Care Professional and the Family, Language Development, and Positive Discipline and Guidance**

- Provide the citation for other training requirements.  
**Minimum Standards for Childcare Centers and Minimum Standards for Family and Group Daycare Homes (licensed providers only).**
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?
  - ☒ Annually.
  - ☐ Other. Describe

### 5.3 Monitoring and Enforcement Policies and Practices for CCDF Providers

#### 5.3.1 Enforcement of licensing and health and safety requirements

Lead agencies must certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF services comply with all applicable State and local health and safety requirements, including those described in 98.41 (98.42(a)). This may include, but is not limited to, any systems used to ensure that providers complete health and safety trainings, any documentation required to be maintained by child care providers or any other monitoring procedures to ensure compliance. Note – Inspection requirements are described starting in 5.3.2.

To certify, describe the procedures to ensure that CCDF providers comply with all applicable State and local health and safety requirements.

**All programs receiving child care subsidy must submit a fire inspection with no code violations, health inspection and food permit or approved catering plan, and zoning approval.**

#### 5.3.2 Inspections for licensed CCDF providers.

Lead agencies must require licensing inspectors to perform inspections—with no fewer than one pre-licensure inspection for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards—of each child care provider and facility in the state/territory. Licensing inspectors are required to perform no fewer than one annual, unannounced inspection of each licensed CCDF provider for compliance with all child care licensing standards; it shall include an inspection for compliance with health and safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41) and fire standards; inspectors may inspect for compliance with all three standards—health, safety, and fire—at the same time (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(II); 98.16 (n); 98.42(b)(2)(i)).

Certify by responding to the questions below to describe your state/territory's monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that licensed child care providers comply with licensing standards, including compliance with health and safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41) and fire standards.

##### a) Licensed CCDF center-based child care

- 
1. Describe your state/territory's requirements for *pre-licensure inspections* of licensed child care center providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.  
**Licensed CCDF providers must submit a fire inspection with no code violations, health inspection and food permit or approved catering plan, and zoning approval. They are inspected for compliance with all minimum standards requirements for day care centers. The facilities cannot have any deficiencies in any areas of the Minimum Standards**
  2. Describe your state/territory's requirements for annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF child care center providers.  
**Licensed CCDF providers cannot have any deficiencies in any areas of the Minimum Standards.**
  3. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:  
☒ Once a year  
☐ More than once a year. Describe
  4. Describe the monitoring procedures (including differential monitoring, if applicable) and how the inspections ensure that child care center providers comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.  
**Licensed CCDF providers are monitored annually for full compliance of the Minimum Standards. In addition, all licensed CCDF providers are inspected anytime a complaint, incident, and serious accident is reported.**
  5. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF center providers  
**Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and the Health Safety Guidelines for CCDF facilities.**

b) Licensed CCDF family child care home

1. Describe your state/territory's requirements for *pre-licensure inspections* of licensed family child care providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.  
**Licensed CCDF home providers have to have a fire inspection with no violations and zoning approval. In addition, they have to meet all minimum standards for either a family daycare home or group daycare home.**
2. Describe your state/territory's requirements for at least annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF family child care providers.  
**Licensed CCDF home providers cannot have any deficiencies in any areas of the Minimum Standards for Family Day Care Homes and Group Day Care Homes.**
3. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:  
☒ Once a year  
☐ More than once a year. Describe

- 
4. Describe the monitoring procedures (including differential monitoring, if applicable) and how the inspections ensure that CCDF family child care providers comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.  
**Licensed CCDF home providers are monitored annually for full compliance of the Minimum Standards for Family Day Care Homes and Group Day Care Homes. In addition, all licensed CCDF home providers are inspected anytime a complaint, incident, and serious accident is reported.**
  5. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF family child care providers  
**Minimum Standards for Family Day Care Homes and Group Day Care Homes.**
- c) Licensed in-home CCDF child care
- ☒ N/A. In-home CCDF child care (care in the child's own home) is not licensed in the State/Territory. Skip to
1. Describe your state/territory's requirements for *pre-licensure inspections* of licensed in-home child care providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.
  2. Describe your state/territory's requirements for at least annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF in-home child care providers.
  3. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:
    - ☐ Once a year
    - ☐ More than once a year. Describe
  4. Describe the monitoring procedures (including differential monitoring, if applicable) and how the inspections ensure that in-home CCDF child care providers comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.  
In-home providers are exempt from this requirement.
  5. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed in-home CCDF providers.
- d) List the entity(ies) in your state/territory that are responsible for conducting pre-licensure inspections and unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF providers.

**The Alabama Department of Human Resources, Child Care Services Division**

5.3.3 Lead Agencies must have policies and practices that require licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) to perform an annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider for compliance with health, safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41), and fire standards (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(IV); 98.42(b)(2)(ii)). Lead Agencies have the option to exempt relative providers (as described in section (658P(6)(B)) from this requirement. To certify, respond to the questions below to describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of:

- 
- a) License-exempt center-based CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

**Annual -unannounced visits are made to the above facilities. In addition, complaints, incidents, and serious accidents are investigated when received. Full compliance monitoring is used not differential monitoring.**

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**

- b) License-exempt family child care CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

**The lead agency does not have licensed-exempt family child care providers.**

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

**Not Applicable**

- c) License-exempt in-home CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, if relative care is exempt from monitoring, and if differential monitoring is used.

**In-home providers are exempt from this requirement.**

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

**Not Applicable**

5.3.4 The Lead Agency must have policies and practices that require licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) to perform an annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(IV); 98.42(b)(2)(ii)). The state/territory may determine if exempt relative providers (as described in section (658P(6)(B)) do not need to meet this requirement. At a minimum, the health and safety requirements to be inspected must address the standards listed in 5.1.4 (98.41(a)). To certify, describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of:

- a) License-exempt center-based CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

**License-exempt center-based CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used. Annual -unannounced visits are made to the above facilities. In addition, complaints, incidents, and serious accidents are investigated when received. Full compliance monitoring is used not differential monitoring.**

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

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**Health and Safety Guidelines-Requirements and Procedures for Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program and Health and Safety Guidelines -Requirements and Procedures for Out of School Time Facilities Participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program**

- b) License-exempt family child care CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

**The lead agency does not have license-exempt family child care providers.**

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

**Not Applicable**

- c) License-exempt in-home CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, if relative care is exempt from monitoring, and if differential monitoring is used.

**In-home child care providers are exempt from this requirement.**

- d) Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

**Not Applicable**

**5.3.5 Licensing inspectors.**

Lead Agencies will have policies and practices that ensure that individuals who are hired as licensing inspectors are qualified to inspect child care providers and facilities and have received health and safety training appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served. Training shall include, but is not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41(a)(1) and all aspects of the State's licensure requirements (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(I); 98.42(b)(1)).

- a) To certify, describe how the Lead Agency ensures that licensing inspectors are qualified to inspect child care facilities and providers and that those inspectors have received training on health and safety requirements that are appropriate to the age of the children in care and the type of provider setting (98.42(b)(1)).

**The minimum requirements for licensing inspectors (Child Care Consultant) is a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Child Development, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Home Economics with major coursework in Child Development, or a closely related field and two years of professional experience in teaching preschool or elementary children, directing day care activities, or in licensing day care facilities. Consultants are extensively trained on the Minimum Standards that pertains to the facilities they will be inspecting. In addition, they are trained on the Minimum Standards for other facilities as well as the Health and Safety Guidelines for programs participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program. Consultants are trained on the computer system pertaining to licensing, intake procedures, complaint investigations, and deficiency writing. Consultants shadow experienced consultants with various types of monitoring visits and began to independently complete portions of the evaluations. The consultants are monitored by their supervisor for accuracy in completing the evaluation of the facility. The lead agency has created the Training and Development unit within the**

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**Child Care Services Division to conduct new hire, refresher training for child care consultants.**

- b) Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

[http://personnel.alabama.gov/Documents/Announcements/100221\\_A.pdf](http://personnel.alabama.gov/Documents/Announcements/100221_A.pdf)

5.3.6 The States and Territories shall have policies and practices that require the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers and facilities in the state/territory to be maintained at a level sufficient to enable the state/territory to conduct effective inspections of child care providers and facilities on a timely basis in accordance with federal, state, and local laws (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(III); 98.42(b)(3)).

- a) To certify, describe the state/territory policies and practices regarding the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers (i.e., number of providers per number of child care providers) and facilities in the state/territory and include how the ratio is sufficient to conduct effective inspections on a timely basis.

**The average caseload assignment for a consultant with child care centers is approximately 70-72 facilities. The average caseload assignment for a consultant with day care homes is approximately 75 facilities. When determining the number of facilities assigned to the consultants consideration is given to the distance of travel from to the child care facility, the number of facilities in urban and rural areas, and the number of complaints/incidents received by type of facilities.**

- b) Provide the policy citation and state/territory ratio of licensing inspectors.

**There is no policy citation regarding the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers.**

5.3.7 States and territories have the option to exempt relatives (defined in CCDF regulations as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings if living in a separate residence, aunts, and uncles (98.42(c)) from inspection requirements. *Note:* This exception only applies if the individual cares *only* for relative children. Does the state/territory exempt relatives from the inspection requirements listed in 5.3.3?

- ☒ Yes, relatives are exempt from all inspection requirements. If the state/territory exempts relatives from all inspection requirements, describe how the state ensures the health and safety of children in relative care.

**Relative care providers must complete a health and safety checklist before services are approved for subsidy reimbursement. Through a contract with Family Guidance Center of Alabama the lead agency administers the Kids and Kin Relative Child Care Program. The initiative provides training and technical assistance to related child care providers to increase the quality of care in the related child care setting.**

- ☐ Yes, relatives are exempt from some inspection requirements. If the state/territory exempts relatives from the inspection requirements, describe which inspection requirements do not apply to relative providers (including which relatives may be

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exempt) and how the State ensures the health and safety of children in relative care.

- ☐ No, relatives are not exempt from inspection requirements.

## 5.4 Criminal Background Checks

5.4.1 In recognition of the significant challenges to implementing the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) background check requirements, all States applied for and received extensions through September 30, 2018. The Office of Child Care (OCC)/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)/U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is committed to granting additional waivers of up to 2 years, in one year increments (i.e., potentially through September 30, 2020) if significant milestones for background check requirements are met. In order to receive these time-limited waivers, states and territories will demonstrate that the milestones are met and apply for the time-limited waiver by responding to questions 5.4.1a through 5.4.1h below.

As a reminder, the CCDBG Act requires States and territories to have in effect requirements, policies and procedures to conduct criminal background checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all child care providers that are 1) licensed, regulated, or registered under state/territory law; or, 2) all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers). Background check requirements apply to any staff member who is employed by a child care provider for compensation, including contract employees and self-employed individuals; whose activities involve the care or supervision of children; or who has unsupervised access to children. For FCC homes, this requirement includes the caregiver and any other adults residing in the family child care home who are age 18 or older. This requirement does not apply to individuals who are related to all children for whom child care services are provided.

A criminal background check must include 8 specific components, which encompass 3 in-state checks, 2 national checks, and 3 inter-state checks:

1. Criminal registry or repository using fingerprints in the current state of residency (in-state);
2. Sex offender registry or repository check in the current state of residency (in-state);
3. Child abuse and neglect registry and database check in the current state of residency (in-state);
4. FBI fingerprint check (national);
5. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) (national);
6. Criminal registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years, with the use of fingerprints being optional (inter-state);
7. Sex offender registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years (inter-state); and
8. Child abuse and neglect registry and database in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years (inter-state).

### **Milestone Prerequisites for Time-Limited Waivers**

By September 30, 2018, states and territories must have requirements, policies and procedures for four specific background check components, and must be conducting those checks for all new (prospective) child care staff, in accordance with 45 CFR 98.43 and 98.16(o):

- The national FBI fingerprint check; and,
- The three in-state background check provisions for the current state of residency:
  - state criminal registry or repository using fingerprints;
  - state sex offender registry or repository check;
  - state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database .

All four components are required in order for the milestone to be considered met.

If the milestone prerequisites are met, then time-limited waivers may be requested for the components as outlined in the table below.

<b>Background Check Components</b>	<b>If milestone is met, time-limited waiver allowed for:</b>
1) In-state criminal w/fingerprints	Conducting background checks on backlog of current (existing) staff only
2) In-state sex offender registry	
3) In-state state-based child abuse and neglect registry	
4) FBI fingerprint check	
5) NCIC National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR)	Establishing requirements and procedures AND/OR
6) Inter-state state criminal registry	Conducting background checks on all new (prospective) child care staff AND/OR
7) Inter-state state sex offender registry	Conducting background checks on backlog of current (existing) staff
8) Inter-state child abuse and neglect registry	

States and Territories will apply for the initial waiver for a one-year period (starting October 1, 2018 and ending September 30, 2019) as part of the submission of this Plan. If approved, States and Territories will have the option to renew these waivers for one additional year as long as

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progress is demonstrated during the initial waiver period. Additional guidance will be issued later on the timeline and criteria for requesting the waiver renewal.

#### Overview of Background Check Implementation deadlines

- Original deadline for implementation (658H(j)(1) of CCDBG Act): September 30, 2017
- Initial one-year extension deadline (658H(j)(2) of CCDBG Act): September 30, 2018
- One-year waiver deadline (45 CFR 98.19(b)(1)(i)): September 30, 2019
- Waiver renewal deadline (45 CFR 98.19(b)(1)(ii)): September 30, 2020

Use questions 5.4.1a through 5.4.1d below to describe achievement of the milestone components, use questions 5.4.1e through 5.4.1h to provide the status for the remaining checks, and as applicable, use questions 5.4.1a through 5.4.1h to request a time-limited waiver for any allowable background check requirement.

- a) Briefly summarize the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state criminal registry or repository, with the use of fingerprints required in the state where the staff member resides.

**The Lead Agency's Office of Criminal History provides for criminal history checks through online applications and live scans of fingerprints through a third party vendor. Alabama law requires that all reports of criminal history background information received shall be confidential and marked confidential with no further disclosure and shall not be made available for public inspection. Appeals of results of the criminal background check are submitted to the Office of Criminal History. From the point that the applicant completes the live scan the results are submitted to the Office of Criminal History within 3 business days. The results are reviewed by the Office of Criminal History and the applicant is notified within 2 weeks**

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).  
**Any provider that is licensed, regulated or registered with the Lead Agency is required to undergo criminal background checks regardless of CCDF participation.**
- ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).  
**Other providers are required to comply with background check requirements if they are registered to serve children participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program.**
- iii. Has the search of the state criminal registry or repository, with the use of fingerprints, been conducted for all current (existing) child care staff?
- ☒ Yes.
- ☐ No. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☐ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this

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requirement. Describe the status of conducting the search of the state criminal registry or repository, with the use of fingerprints for current (existing) child care staff. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

- iv. List the citation:

**Code of Alabama (1975), 38-13-1, et seq.**

- b) Briefly summarize the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state sex offender registry or repository in the state where the staff member resides.

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o). **All licensed, regulated or registered child care providers are required to complete a criminal history background check.**
- ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
- iii. Has the search of the state sex offender registry or repository been conducted for all current (existing) child care staff?
- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☒ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. **September 30, 2019.** Describe the status of conducting the search of the state sex offender registry or repository for current (existing) child care staff. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:
- Convening partnering agencies/divisions to gather info and establish information sharing protocol and interagency agreement protocol.**
- Challenges include impact on other department divisions that require background check included sex offender information.**

- iv. List the citation:

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- c) Briefly summarize the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database in the state where the staff member resides.

**All child care providers and staff must submit a child abuse and neglect registry clearance as apart of the criminal history background check. Requests are submitted, by the provider, to the Alabama Department of Human Resources, Family Services Division.**

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

**This requirement applies to all licensed, regulated and registered providers.**

- ii. Describe how these requirements apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

**This requirement applies to all licensed, regulated and registered providers on the CCDF program.**

- iii. Has the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database been conducted for all current (existing) child care staff?

☒ Yes

- ☐ No. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☐ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement.  Describe the status of conducting the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database for current (existing) child care staff. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

- iv. List the citation:

- d) Briefly summarize the requirements, policies and procedures for the FBI fingerprint check using Next Generation Identification.

**The Lead Agency's Office of Criminal History provides for criminal history checks through online applications and live scans of fingerprints through a third party vendor. Alabama law requires that all reports of criminal history background information received shall be confidential and marked confidential with no further disclosure and shall not be made available for public inspection. Appeals of results of the criminal background check are submitted to the Office of Criminal History. From the point that the applicant completes the live scan the results are submitted to the Office of Criminal History within 3 business days. The results are reviewed by the Office of Criminal History and the applicant is notified within 2 weeks.**

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- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
- ii. Describe how these requirements apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
- iii. Has the search of the FBI fingerprint check using Next Generation Identification been conducted for all current (existing) child care staff?
- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☐ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement.   Describe the status of conducting the FBI fingerprint check using Next Generation Identification for current (existing) child care staff. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:
- iv. List the citation:
- Code of Alabama (1975), 38-13-1, et seq.**
- e) Describe the status of the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the NCIC's National Sex Offender Registry.
- ☐ Fully implemented for all prospective and existing required child care providers (all licensed, regulated or registered; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers)). This means that the State/Territory has requirements and procedures in effect, and has conducted the search of the NCIC's NSOR check on all new and existing child care staff.
- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
- ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
- iii. List the citation:
- ☒ In progress. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☒ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. **September 30, 2019**. Describe the status of implementation of requirements, policies and procedures for the NCIC's National Sex Offender
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Registry. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all prospective and existing licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

**Convening partnering agencies/divisions to gather info and establish information sharing protocol and interagency agreement protocol.**

**Challenges include impact on other department divisions that require background check information, including sex offender information.**

- f) Describe the status of the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the criminal registries or repositories in other states where the child care staff member resided during the preceding 5 years, with the use of fingerprints being optional in those other states.
- ☐ Fully implemented for all prospective and existing required child care providers (all licensed, regulated or registered; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers)). This means that the State/Territory has requirements and procedures in effect, and has conducted the inter-state state criminal registry check on all new and existing child care staff.
    - i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
    - ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
    - iii. List the citation:
  - ☒ In progress. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☒ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. **September 30, 2019**. Describe the status of implementation of requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the criminal registries or repositories in other states where the child care staff member resided during the preceding 5 years, with the use of fingerprints being optional in those other states. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all (prospective and existing) licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all providers eligible to provide care for children receiving CCDF; 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:  
**Convening partnering agencies/divisions to gather info and establish information sharing protocol and interagency agreement protocol.**

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**Challenges include impact on other lead agency divisions that receive and conduct the checks and any changes needed in policy to allow for obtaining this information from other states and the ability to obtain information on any previous residences for child care provider staff.**

- g) Describe the status of the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state sex offender registry or repository in each state where the staff member resided during the previous 5 years.
- ☐ Fully implemented for all required child care providers (all licensed, regulated or registered; and all (prospective and existing) child care providers eligible to provide care for children receiving CCDF assistance). This means that the State/Territory has requirements and procedures in effect, and has conducted the inter-state state sex offender registry check on all new and existing child care staff.
    - i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
    - ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all providers eligible to care for children receiving CCDF, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
    - iii. List the citation:
  - ☒ In progress. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☒ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. **September 30, 2019.** Describe the status of implementation of requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state sex offender registry or repository in each state where the staff member resided during the previous 5 years. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all (prospective and existing) licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all providers eligible to provide care for children receiving CCDF; 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:  
**Convening partnering agencies/divisions to gather info and establish information sharing protocol across states.**  
**Challenges include impact on other lead agency divisions' that collect the information. Any changes needed in policy to allow for obtaining this information from other states and the ability to obtain information on any previous residences for child care provider staff.**
- h) Describe the status of the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database in each State where the staff member resided during the previous 5 years.
- ☐ Fully implemented for all prospective and existing required child care providers (all licensed, regulated or registered; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF

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services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers)). This means that the State/Territory has requirements and procedures in effect, and has conducted the state-based child abuse and neglect registry check on all new and existing child care staff.

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
  - ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
  - iii. List the citation:
- ☒ In progress. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☒ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. **September 30, 2019** for the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database in each State where the staff member resided during the previous 5 years. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all (prospective and existing) licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

**Convening partnering agencies/divisions to gather info and establish information sharing protocol across states. Challenges include impact on other lead agency divisions' that collect the information. Any changes needed in policy to allow for obtaining this information from other states and the ability to obtain information on any previous residences for child care provider staff.**

5.4.2 A child care provider must submit a request to the appropriate state/territory agency for a criminal background check for each child care staff member, including prospective child care staff members, prior to the date an individual becomes a child care staff member and at least once every 5 years thereafter. A prospective child care staff member may begin to work on a provisional basis for a child care provider after completing either a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint check or a search of the state/territory criminal registry or repository using fingerprints (in the state/territory where the staff member resides. However, the child care staff member must be supervised at all times pending completion of all the background check components (98.43(d)(4)).

5.4.3 Does the state/territory allow prospective staff members to begin work on a provisional basis (if supervised at all times) after completing the FBI fingerprint check or a fingerprint check of the state criminal registry or repository in the state where the child care staff member resides?

- ☐ No.
- ☒ Yes. Describe:

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**Child care staff may work in the facility under the supervision of another individual who has completed and received satisfactory suitability of a criminal history background check and child abuse and neglect clearance. The staff has 90 days to complete the background check requirements to be counted in staff ratios and allowed unsupervised access to children.**

- 5.4.4 The state/territory must conduct the background checks as quickly as possible and shall not exceed 45 days after the child care provider submitted the request. The state/territory shall provide the results of the background check in a statement that indicates whether the staff member is eligible or ineligible.

**The Lead Agency's Office of Criminal History provides for criminal history checks through online applications and live scans of fingerprints through a third party vendor. From the point that the applicant completes the live scan the results are submitted to the Office of Criminal History within 3 business days. The results are reviewed by the Office of Criminal History and the applicant is notified within 2 weeks.**

- 5.4.5 Describe the requirements, policies, and procedures in place to respond as expeditiously as possible to other states', territories', and tribes' requests for background check results to accommodate the 45-day timeframe, including any agencies/entities responsible for responding to requests from other states (98.43(a)(1)(iii)).

**The Lead Agency's Office of Criminal History has responsibilities for actions related to criminal history checks. Other states requesting Alabama criminal history checks are referred to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency. Other states can request Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) information by sending a request to the Alabama Department of Human Resources, Family Services Division.**

- 5.4.6 Child care staff members cannot be employed by a child care provider receiving CCDF subsidy funds if they refuse a background check, make materially false statements in connection with the background check, or are registered or required to be registered on the state or National Sex Offender Registry. Potential staff members also cannot be employed by a provider receiving CCDF funds if they have been convicted of: a felony consisting of murder, child abuse or neglect, crimes against children, spousal abuse, crimes involving rape or sexual assault, kidnapping, arson, physical assault or battery, or—subject to an individual review (at the state/territory's option)—a drug-related offense committed during the preceding 5 years; a violent misdemeanor committed as an adult against a child, including the following crimes—child abuse, child endangerment, or sexual assault; or a misdemeanor involving child pornography (98.43(c)(1)).

*Note:* The Lead Agency may not publicly release the results of individual background checks. It may release aggregated data by crime as long as the data do not include personally identifiable information (98.43(e)(2)(iii)).

**The lead agency contracts with Gemalto Cogent, Inc. to conduct criminal background checks. The criminal background check procedures, forms and frequently asked questions are available on the Gemalto/Cogent website at**

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[https://www.aps.gemalto.com/al/index\\_dhrNew.htm](https://www.aps.gemalto.com/al/index_dhrNew.htm). General information about the criminal background check requirements and a link to the Gemalto/Cognet website is on the lead agency's website.

- 5.4.7 Does the state/territory disqualify child care staff members based on their conviction for other crimes not specifically listed in 98.43(h)?

☐ No.

☒ Yes. Describe:

**Effective March 21, 2018, the Act #201-278, the Child Care Safety Act was signed into law. The Act's disqualifying crimes includes a violent offense defined under Code of Alabama 1975 section 12-25-32 and any sex crimes listed in Code of Alabama section 15-20A-5.**

- 5.4.8 The state/territory has a process for a child care staff member to appeal the results of his or her background check to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the criminal background report, as detailed in 98.43(e)(3). Describe how the Lead Agency ensures the privacy of background checks and provides opportunities for applicants to appeal the results of background checks. In addition, describe whether the state/territory has a review process for individuals disqualified due to a felony drug offense to determine if that individual is still eligible for employment (98.43(e)(2–4)).

**Within 30 days of the date of notification, an individual determined unsuitable for employment based upon a disqualifying conviction may request in writing a reversal of the determination of unsuitability if the conviction is not for a sex crime or a crime committed against a child, an elderly individual, or an individual with disabilities.**

- 5.4.9 The State/Territory may not charge fees that exceed the actual costs of processing applications and administering a criminal background check (98.43(f)). Describe how the state/territory ensures that fees charged for completing the background checks do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administration, regardless of whether they are conducted by the state/territory or a third-party vendor or contractor. Lead Agencies can report that no fees are charged if applicable (98.43(f)).

**The lead agency contract with the background check processing agency specifies the limit of the fees that can be charged for the background check. The limit set for conducting the background check is \$48.85. No additional fees are charged for completing the background check.**

- 5.4.10 Federal requirements do not address background check requirements for relative providers who receive CCDF; therefore, States have the flexibility to decide which background check requirements relatives, as defined by CCDF, must meet. *Note:* This exception only applies if the individual cares *only* for relative children. Does the state/territory exempt relatives from background checks?

☐ No, relatives are not exempt from background check requirements.

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- ☒ **Yes**, relatives are exempt from *all* background check requirements.
- ☐ Yes, relatives are exempt from *some* background check requirements. If the state/territory exempts relatives from some background check requirements, describe which background check requirements do not apply to relative providers. \_\_\_\_\_

## 6 Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce

This section covers the state or territory framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education (98.44(a)); provides a description of strategies used to strengthen the business practices of child care providers (98.16(z)); and addresses early learning and developmental guidelines.

States and territories are required to describe their framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for caregivers, teachers, and directors, including those working in school-age care (98.44(a)). States and territories must incorporate their knowledge and application of health and safety standards, early learning guidelines, responses to challenging behavior, and the engagement of families. States and territories are required to establish a progression of professional development opportunities to improve the knowledge and skills of CCDF providers (658E(c)(2)(G)). To the extent practicable, professional development should be appropriate to work with a population of children of different ages, English-language learners, children with disabilities, and Native Americans (98.44(b)(2)(iv)). Training and professional development is one of the options that states and territories have for investing their CCDF quality funds (658G(b)(1)).

### 6.1 Professional Development Framework

- 6.1.1 Describe how the state/territory developed its training and professional development. Each State or Territory must describe their professional development framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education, which is developed in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. The framework should include these components: (1) professional standards and competencies, (2) career pathways, (3) advisory structures, (4) articulation, (5) workforce information, and (6) financing (98.44(a)(3)). Flexibility is provided on the strategies, breadth, and depth with which states and territories will develop and implement their framework. Describe how the state/territory's framework for training and professional development addresses the following required elements:

- State/territory professional standards and competencies. Describe:
- Career pathways. Describe:  
**The Alabama Pathways Professional Development Lattice provides early care and education professionals with a tool to track their professional development. Each individual can identify her/his current place on the Alabama Pathways Professional Development Lattice, as well as the progressive path to enhanced training and education within the field of early care and education.**
- Advisory structure. Describe:

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**The Lead Agency convened a Professional Development Plan Steering consisting of representatives from various early care and education stakeholder groups to plan and develop the Alabama Pathways professional development system to address the training and education needs of caregivers and teachers in the field of early childhood and school-age care. The Lead Agency works was completed in 2009. The Department of Early Childhood Education is the agency for the State Advisory Council and was a member of the Professional Development Steering Committee.**

- Articulation. Describe:  
**Articulation agreements are within two- and four-year higher education institutions. Most are local agreements but also there is articulation between the Alabama College System (2-year colleges) and the University of Alabama (one of the state's largest 4-year universities) to accept child development course work obtained at an institution in the Alabama Community College System.**
- Workforce information. Describe:
- Financing. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

The following phrases are optional elements, or elements that should be implemented to the extent practicable, in the training and professional development framework.

- ☐ Continuing education unit trainings and credit-bearing professional development to the extent practicable. Describe:

**Continuing Education Units (CEU) trainings are available from regional Quality Enhancement Agencies. Credit-bearing professional development is available from Alabama Community College System through the T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood Scholarship Programs and the Leadership in Child Care Scholarship program.**

- ☐ Engagement of training and professional development providers, including higher education, in aligning training and educational opportunities with the state/territory's framework. Describe:

Other. Describe:  

- 6.1.2 Describe how the state/territory developed its training and professional development requirements in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (if applicable) or with another state or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC that addresses the professional development, training, and education of child care providers and staff.

**The Lead Agency convened a Professional Development Plan Steering consisting of representatives from various early care and education stakeholder groups to plan and develop the Alabama Pathways professional development system to address the training and**

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education needs of caregivers and teachers in the field of early childhood and school age care. The Department of Early Childhood Education) is the agency for the State Advisory Council, through the Children's Policy Council and was a member of the Professional Development Steering Committee.

6.1.3 Identify how the framework improves the quality, diversity, stability, and retention of caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.44(a)(7)). Check and describe all that apply.

☒ Financial assistance to attain credentials and post-secondary degrees. Describe:

**The lead agency implements two scholarship programs to assist providers attaining credit bearing credentials and post-secondary degrees. The Leadership in Child Care Scholarship program provides financial assistance (tuition and selected fees) to qualified child care professionals working in the child care centers/programs and family and group homes to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, Short-Term Certificate, Certificate, or Associate in Applied Science /Technology Degree in Child Development/Early Care and Education studies. The T.E.A.C.H (Teacher, Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Alabama Scholarship Program was developed to increase the level of education and effectiveness of early learning professionals by making the educational process more affordable, increasing wages, and reducing staff turnover rates. Scholarships are currently offered for the CDA (Child Development Associate) Assessment Fee, Associate Degrees in Child Development and Early Care and Education.**

☒ Financial incentives linked to educational attainment and retention. Describe:

**The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Alabama Scholarship Program awards bonuses for participates who complete T.E.A.C.H. educational goals. The program also pays travel stipends and provides release time for participants to attend classes. The Leadership in Child Care Scholarship program reimburses scholarship recipients the application cost of obtaining the CDA credential.**

☒ Financial incentives and compensation improvements. Describe:

**Alabama Quality STARS rated centers receive annual financial incentives based on the applicable STAR rating.**

☐ Registered apprenticeship programs. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Outreach to high school (including career and technical) students. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Policies for paid sick leave. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Policies for paid annual leave. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Policies for health care benefits. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Policies for retirement benefits. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Support for providers' mental health, such as training in reflective practices and stress-reduction techniques and health and mental health consultation services. Describe:

☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6.2 Training and Professional Development Requirements

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The state/territory must develop training and professional development requirements, including pre-service or orientation training (to be completed within 3 months) and ongoing requirements designed to enable child care providers to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children and to improve the knowledge and skills of the child care workforce. Such requirements shall be applicable to child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF funds across the entire age span, from birth through age 12 (658E(c)(2)(G)). Ongoing training and professional development should be accessible and appropriate to the setting and age of the children served (98.44(b)(2)).

- 6.2.1 Describe how the state/territory incorporates the knowledge and application of its early learning and developmental guidelines (where applicable); its health and safety standards (as described in section 5); and social-emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health intervention models, which can include positive behavior intervention and support models (as described in section 2) in the training and professional development requirements (98.44(b)(2)(ii)).

**Training on the Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) is required for all centers participating in Alabama Quality STARS. The Quality Enhancement Agencies are required to include training on the AELG as part of their basic training requirements. Training is available online and in classroom format. The AELG includes domains on self-concept/emotional development and social development. Quality Enhancement Agencies offer a variety of training options including onsite training, day and evening sessions, training targeting teachers/caregivers of different age groups, inclusive training through the Childcare Enhancement with a Purpose initiative. Training is offered that meets Alabama Minimum Standards training requirements, CDA (Child Development Associate) subject areas, and the Alabama Pathways Professional Development core knowledge areas.**

- 6.2.2 Describe how the state/territory's training and professional development requirements are accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or tribal organizations receiving CCDF funds (as applicable) (98.44(b)(2)(vi)).

**All providers that receive CCDF have access and opportunities for professional development, technical assistance, and support through regional and targeted quality enhancement agencies. Providers supported through the state's tribal organization (the Poarch Band of Creek Indians) are able to access and participate in all training available to providers receiving lead agency funding. All child care providers receive quarterly training calendars from the regional Quality Enhancement Agencies. Training agencies are listed on the CCDF lead agency website along with links to the training agency's website.**

- 6.2.3 Describe how the state/territory will recruit and facilitate the participation of providers with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities (98.16(dd)).

**Alabama contracts with community-based regional Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs) to maximize the quality services for children and families in Alabama. QEAs services must include recruitment and training of child care providers to serve diverse child care populations.**

**The lead agency provides interpreter/translation services and sign language services to remove language and other communication barriers for families who may be eligible for**

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**programs and services. These services are made available to Child Care Management Agencies who determine eligibility for families and register child care providers for the Subsidy Program.**

- 6.2.4 If the Lead Agency provides information or services to providers in other non-English languages, please identify the three primary languages offered or specify that the State has the ability to have translation/interpretation in primary and secondary languages.

**The state has the ability to translate information to providers who are non-English speakers. The primary non-English language in the state is Spanish; however, the lead agency provides interpreter/translation services and sign language services to remove language and other communication barriers. These services are made available to Child Care Management Agencies who determine eligibility for families and register child care providers for the Subsidy Program.**

- 6.2.5 Describe how the state/territory's training and professional development requirements are appropriate, to the extent practicable, for child care providers who care for children receiving child care subsidies, including children of different age groups (such as specialized credentials for providers who care for infants and/or school-age children); English-language learners; children with developmental delays and disabilities; and Native Americans, including Indians and Native Hawaiians (98.44(b)(2)(iii–iv)).

**Training and professional development activities are offered in response to documented needs and are designed to improve the quality of child care provided to children. A variety of methods are encouraged, including resource libraries, provider networks, mentoring programs, and distance education. In collaboration with the Department of Public Health and Quality Enhancement Agencies the lead agency provides training on the Building A Healthy Start: Professional Development for Infant and Toddler Caregivers Project. The Project's purpose is to improve the quality of infant and toddler child care in Alabama by integrating nationally recognized health and safety standards into six best practice training modules for caregivers of infants and toddlers. Topical areas addressed by the modules are: nutrition, physical activity, disaster preparedness, environmental health, social emotional development, and child abuse and neglect prevention. The Child Care Enhancement with a Purpose (CEP) initiative offers free inclusion training to childcare providers. CCEP utilizes experienced teachers and therapists to share simple, practical ways to work with and include children with special needs in daycare centers or home programs. This program offers a curriculum with a multidisciplinary approach which utilizes developmentally appropriate practices and resources for assistance. The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) credential training offers 9 modules of training to child care providers in domains specific to the development of children from birth through age five, including self-concept and emotional development, social development, physical development, language and literacy, and cognitive development. The training uses scientifically-based, developmentally and age appropriate strategies and includes activities that the providers can implement in their programs. The AELG document includes a scientifically, research-based assessment tool**

- 6.2.6 The Lead Agency must provide training and technical assistance to providers and appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving homeless children and families (658E(c)(3)(B)(i)).

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- a) Describe the state/territory's training and TA efforts for providers in identifying and serving homeless children and their families (relates to question 3.2.2).

**The lead agency collaborates with Alabama Department of Education, Homeless Liaison to bring training to Child Care Management Agency eligibltiy staff as they work with families who may be experiencing homelessness. Training is presentd to quality enhancement agencies staff to help them in identify training objectives and connections for to provide TA to providers who work with families experiencing homelessness.**

- b) Describe the state/territory's training and TA efforts for Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff in identifying and serving homeless children and their families (connects to question 3.2.2).

- 6.2.7 The states and territories are required to describe effective internal controls that are in place to ensure program integrity and accountability (98.68(a)). Describe how the state/territory ensures that all providers for children receiving CCDF funds are informed and trained regarding CCDF requirements and integrity (98.68(a)(3)). Check all that apply.

- ☒ Issue policy change notices
- ☐ Issue new policy manual
- ☐ Staff training
- ☐ Orientations
- ☒ Onsite training
- ☒ Online training
- ☐ Regular check-ins to monitor the implementation of CCDF policies
- ☐ The type of check-ins, including the frequency. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ Other. Describe:

**The lead agency has developed a training and development unit within the Child Care Services Divsiion. This unit will ensure that child care providers receive regular and consistent training on Minimum Standards and CCDF requirements, including Subsidy Program participation requirements and CCDF health and safety requirements.**

- 6.2.8 Lead Agencies must develop and implement strategies to strengthen the business practices of child care providers to expand the supply and to improve the quality of child care services (98.16 (z)). Describe the state/territory's strategies to strengthen provider's business practices, which can include training and/or TA efforts.

- a) Identify the strategies that the state/territory is developing and implementing for training and TA.

**All providers including providers that receive CCDF, have access and opportunities for professional development, technical assistance, and support through regional and targeted quality enhancement agencies. All lead agency funded training is free to child care providers. Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs) offer a variety of training options including onsite training, day and evening sessions.**

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**QEAs offer training and supports to encourage providers to operate their programs consistent with effective management skills and business practices. Strategies offered through training and technical assistance (TA) to strengthen provider's business practices include: Director's forums that include training specific to the managerial duties of child care directors and owners, training on using computers and social media, budgeting, program marketing and preparing a marketing plan that includes a clear sense of identity for the program, outreach to parents in provider communities, understand and learn who will be the target families for services; and for new/potential providers considerations for opening a new child care program.**

b) Check the topics addressed in the state/territory's strategies. Check all that apply.

- ☒ Fiscal management
- ☒ Budgeting
- ☐ Recordkeeping
- ☐ Hiring, developing, and retaining qualified staff
- ☐ Risk management
- ☒ Community relationships
- ☒ Marketing and public relations
- ☐ Parent-provider communications, including who delivers the training, education, and/or technical assistance
- ☐ Other. Describe:

### **6.3 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines**

6.3.1 States and territories are required to develop, maintain, or implement early learning and developmental guidelines that are appropriate for children in a forward progression from birth to kindergarten entry (i.e., birth-to-three, three-to-five, birth-to-five), describing what children should know and be able to do and covering the essential domains of early childhood development. These early learning and developmental guidelines are to be used statewide and territory-wide by child care providers and in the development and implementation of training and professional development (658E(c)(2)(T)). The required essential domains for these guidelines are cognition, including language arts and mathematics; social, emotional, and physical development; and approaches toward learning (98.15(a)(9)). At the option of the state/territory, early learning and developmental guidelines for out-of-school time may be developed. *Note:* States and territories may use the quality set-aside, discussed in section 7, to improve on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines.

- a) Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are research-based, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and aligned with kindergarten entry.
- b) Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are appropriate for all children from birth to kindergarten entry.

- 
- c) Check the domain areas included in the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines. Check all that apply.

- ☒ Cognition, including language arts and mathematics
- ☒ Social development
- ☒ Emotional development
- ☒ Physical development
- ☐ Approaches toward learning
- ☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

- d) Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are implemented in consultation with the educational agency and the State Advisory Council or other state or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC.

**Alabama Early Learning Guidelines are the result of collaboration between the Alabama Department of Human Resources and various stakeholders across the state. Public Awareness Sessions were held across the state which yielded over 1,000 participants including caregivers, teachers, parents, trainers, and advocates. Consultation with early childhood education professionals provided invaluable feedback and input to help ensure that the Guidelines were based on the latest research regarding child growth and development, and that they reflected sound early childhood theory and practices.**

- e) Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are updated and include the date first issued and/or the frequency of updates.

**The AELG were first issued in 2005. Update to the Early Learning Guidelines established was completed in FY2015. However, implementation of the updates has been delayed.**

- f) Provide the Web link to the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines.

<http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/documents/AELG.pdf>

6.3.2 CCDF funds cannot be used to develop or implement an assessment for children that:

- Will be the primary or sole basis to determine a child care provider ineligible to participate in the CCDF,
- Will be used as the primary or sole basis to provide a reward or sanction for an individual provider,
- Will be used as the primary or sole method for assessing program effectiveness,
- Will be used to deny children eligibility to participate in the CCDF (658E(c)(2)(T)(ii)(I); 98.15(a)(2)).

Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are used.  

6.3.3 If quality funds are used to develop, maintain, or implement early learning guidelines, describe the measureable indicators that will be used to evaluate the state/territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services and the data on the extent to which the state/territory has met these measures (98.53(f)(3)).

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## 7 Support Continuous Quality Improvement

Lead Agencies are required to reserve and use a portion of their Child Care and Development Fund program expenditures for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care (98.53). The quality activities should be aligned with a statewide or territory-wide assessment of the state's or territory's need to carry out such services and care.

States and territories are required to report on these quality improvement investments through CCDF in three ways:

1. In the Plan, states and territories will describe the types of activities supported by quality investments over the 3-year period (658G(b); 98.16(j)).
2. ACF will collect annual data on how much CCDF funding is spent on quality activities using the expenditure report (ACF-696). This report will be used to determine compliance with the required quality and infant and toddler spending requirements (658G(d)(1); 98.53(f)).
3. For each year of the Plan period, states and territories will submit a separate annual Quality Progress Report that will include a description of activities to be funded by quality expenditures and the measures used by the state/territory to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory (658G(d); 98.53(f)).

States and territories must fund efforts in at least one of the following 10 activities:

- Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce
- Improving on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services
- Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers
- Establishing or expanding a statewide system of child care resource and referral services
- Supporting compliance with state/territory requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety (as described in section 5)
- Evaluating the quality of child care programs in the state/territory, including evaluating how programs positively impact children
- Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- Performing other activities to improve the quality of child care services, as long as outcome measures relating to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry are possible.

Throughout this Plan, states and territories will describe the types of quality improvement activities where CCDF investments are being made, including but not limited to, quality set-aside funds and will describe the measurable indicators of progress used to evaluate state/territory progress in improving the quality of child care services for each expenditure (98.53(f)).

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This section covers the quality activities needs assessment and quality improvement activities and indicators of progress for each of the activities undertaken in the state or territory.

## **7.1 Quality Activities Needs Assessment for Child Care Services**

- 7.1.1 Lead Agencies must invest in quality activities based on an assessment of the state/territory's needs to carry out those activities. Lead Agencies have the flexibility to design an assessment of their quality activities that best meet their needs, including how often they do the assessment. Describe your state/territory assessment process, including the frequency of assessment (658G(a)(1); 98.53(a)).

The Children's Policy Council (CPC) is designated as the State's Advisory Council. The CPC is designed to support providers of children's services as they work collaboratively in developing community service plans to address the needs of children ages 0-19 and their families.

County needs assessments are completed annually by each Alabama county prior to July 1 of each year. The State Children's Policy Council reviews the local needs assessments prepared by each county and makes recommendation to appropriate state leaders to help solve issues facing the children and families of Alabama.

- 7.1.2 Describe the findings of the assessment and if any overarching goals for quality improvement were identified.

The overarching goals of quality improvement activities is to enhance the quality of child care, to positively impact the early learning experiences of young children and support the training and education needs of caregivers and teachers in the field of early childhood and school-age care. The 2017 Needs Assessment listed Substance Abuse, Parental Involvement and Family Engagement, and Mental Health as the top 3 issues impacting Alabama's children.

### **Substance Abuse**

**The local counties reported that substance abuse is the underlying factor to many problems across the state. It impacts crime rates, child abuse, domestic violence, and negatively impacts school readiness and early learning.**

### **Parental Involvement and Family Engagement**

**Access to family counseling and tailored family resources is needed to positively impact parental involvement and family engagement.**

### **Mental Health**

**Mental Health needs emphasized the need for increasing access to counselors, increasing access to mental health professionals with specialized training, creating more acute inpatient services, and providing knowledge surrounding the availability of services for adults and especially children.**

## **7.2 Use of Quality Funds**

- 7.2.1 Check the quality improvement activities in which the state/territory is investing.

☒ Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

- 
- If checked, respond to section 7.3 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ CCDF funds
  - ☐ Other funds
- ☒ Developing, maintaining, or implementing early learning and developmental guidelines. If checked, respond to section 6.3 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ CCDF funds
  - ☐ Other funds
- ☒ Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system. If checked, respond to 7.4 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ CCDF funds
  - ☐ Other funds
- ☒ Improving the supply and quality of child care services for infants and toddlers. If checked, respond to 7.5 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ CCDF funds
  - ☐ Other funds
- ☒ Establishing or expanding a statewide system of CCR&R services, as discussed in 1.7. If checked, respond to 7.6 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ CCDF funds
  - ☐ Other funds
- ☒ Facilitating compliance with state/territory requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety standards (as described in section 5). If checked, respond to 7.7 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ **CCDF funds**
  - ☐ Other funds
- ☒ Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care services within the state/territory. If checked, respond to 7.8 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ CCDF funds
  - ☐ Other funds
- ☒ Supporting accreditation. If checked, respond to 7.9 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ CCDF funds
  - ☐ Other funds
- ☒ Supporting state/territory or local efforts to develop high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development. If checked, respond to 7.10 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
- ☒ CCDF funds

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- ☐ Other funds
  - ☐ Other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of child care services and which measurement of outcomes related to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry is possible. If checked, respond to 7.11 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
    - ☐ CCDF funds
    - ☐ Other funds

### 7.3 Supporting Training and Professional Development of the Child Care Workforce With CCDF Quality Funds

Lead Agencies can invest in the training, professional development, and post-secondary education of the child care workforce as part of a progression of professional development activities, such as those included at 98.44 in addition to the following (98.53(a)(1)).

7.3.1 Describe how the state/territory funds the training and professional development of the child care workforce.

a) Check and describe which content is included in training and professional development activities and describe who or how an entity is funded to address this topic. Check all that apply.

☒ Promoting the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including those efforts related to nutrition and physical activity, using scientifically based, developmentally appropriate, and age-appropriate strategies. Describe:

**Training and professional development activities are offered in response to documented needs and are designed to improve the quality of child care provided to children. A variety of methods are encouraged, including resource libraries, provider networks, mentoring programs, and distance education. In collaboration with the Department of Health and Quality Enhancement Agencies the lead agency provides training on the Building a Healthy Start: Professional Development for Infant and Toddler Caregivers Project. The Project's purpose is to improve the quality of infant and toddler child care in Alabama by integrating nationally recognized health and safety standards into six best practice training modules for caregivers of infants and toddlers. Topical areas addressed by the modules are: nutrition, physical activity, disaster preparedness, environmental health, social emotional development, and child abuse and neglect prevention. The Child Care Enhancement with a Purpose initiative offers free inclusion training to childcare providers. CCEP utilizes experienced teachers and therapists to share simple, practical ways to work with and include children with special needs in daycare centers or home programs. This program offers a curriculum with a multidisciplinary approach which utilizes developmentally appropriate practices and resources for assistance. The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) credential training offers 9 modules of training to child care providers in domains specific to the development of children from birth through age five, including self-concept and emotional development, social development, physical development,**

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language and literacy, and cognitive development. The training uses scientifically-based, developmentally and age appropriate strategies and includes activities that the providers can implement in their programs. The AELG document includes a scientifically, research-based assessment tool.

**Help Me Grow and the Strengthening Families**

- ☒ Implementing behavior management strategies, including positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social-emotional development and early childhood mental health and that reduce challenging behaviors, including a reduction in expulsions of preschool-age children from birth to age 5 for such behaviors. (See also section 2.5.) Describe:

**Training and professional development activities are offered in response to documented needs from provider surveys, training requests, consultations with providers and professional development plans established with practitioners, and are designed to improve the quality of child care provided to children. A variety of methods are encouraged, including resource libraries, provider networks, mentoring programs, onsite training and distance education.**

- ☐ Engaging parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills, and capacity to become meaningful partners in supporting their children's positive development. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ Implementing developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, and evidence-based curricula and designing learning environments that are aligned with state/territory early learning and developmental standards. Describe:

**Training and professional development activities are offered in response to documented needs and are designed to improve the quality of child care provided to children. A variety of methods are encouraged, including resource libraries, provider networks, mentoring programs, and distance education. The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) credential training offers 9 modules of training to child care providers in five domains specific to the development of children from birth through age five: self-concept and emotional development, social development, physical development, language and literacy, and cognitive development. The training uses scientifically-based developmentally and age appropriate strategies and includes activities that the programs can implement in their programs. The AELG document includes a scientifically, research-based assessment tool.**

- ☒ Providing onsite or accessible comprehensive services for children and developing community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development. Describe:

**The Healthy Child Care Alabama Program in partnership with the Alabama Department of Public Health offers services to improve the integration of health concepts in child care environment. The program focuses on identification and referral of infants and toddlers ages birth to three years who are potentially eligible for**

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**Alabama's Early Intervention System. The program provides on-site training and technical assistance to all categories of child care programs.**

**Help Me Grow and Strengthening Families**

- ☐ Using data to guide program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Caring for children of families in geographic areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Caring for and supporting the development of children with disabilities and developmental delays. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**Training and professional development activities are offered in response to documented needs and are designed to improve the quality of child care provided to children. A variety of methods is encouraged, including resource libraries, provider networks, mentoring programs, and distance education. The Child Care Enhancement with a Purpose initiative offers free inclusion training to childcare providers. CCEP utilizes experienced teachers and therapists to share simple, practical ways to work with and include children with special needs in daycare centers or home programs. This program offers a curriculum with a multidisciplinary approach which utilizes developmentally appropriate practices and resources for assistance. On-site support and training is available for child care programs. The initiative also provides qualified support for families.**

- ☒ Supporting the positive development of school-age children. Describe:  
**The lead agency provides the Dependent Care Program a statewide program for quality school age care utilizing local education agencies in partnership with the Alabama State Department of Education. The lead agency also contracts with the Truman Pierce Institute through Auburn University to lead the development in creating quality standards and training for afterschool programs. The lead agency is member of the Alabama Afterschool Community Network (ALACN). The ALACN purpose is to ensure Alabama youth, families, and communities have access to high quality programming during Out- of-School time that promotes positive development and life-long learning. Other collaborators in this initiative include the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and the Alabama Community Education Association (ACEA). Through this collaboration the state is developing quality standards for afterschool programs. The standards can be found on the ALACN website at <http://alabamaacn.org/>.**
- ☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

- b) Check how the state/territory connects child care providers with available federal and state/territory financial aid or other resources to pursue post-secondary education relevant for the early childhood and school-age workforce. Check all that apply.
- ☐ Coaches, mentors, consultants, or other specialists available to support access to post-secondary training, including financial aid and academic counseling

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- ☐ Statewide or territory-wide, coordinated, and easily accessible clearinghouse (i.e., an online calendar, a listing of opportunities) of relevant post-secondary education opportunities
  - ☒ Financial awards, such as scholarships, grants, loans, or reimbursement for expenses, from the state/territory to complete post-secondary education
  - ☐ Other. Describe:

7.3.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

**The lead agency monitors and evaluates the number of programs participating in and achieving higher ratings in the Alabama Quality STARS - QRIS program, improvements of scores by providers on national tools such as the FCERS (Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale), ITES (Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale), ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) and PAS (Program Administration Scale) assessments, and the number of teachers reaching higher levels on the Alabama Pathways professional development lattice.**

**All lead agency funded trainings are evaluated using a pre- and post-test of participant knowledge and understanding of the training content. Quality Enhancement Agencies are required to submit quarterly reports that include information regarding training, consultation, technical assistance, and other quality activities. The evaluation indicates the participation by all categories of providers in quality activities that increase participant knowledge and understanding of child care best practices.**

#### 7.4 Quality Rating and Improvement System

Lead Agencies may respond in this section based on other systems of quality improvement, even if not called a QRIS, as long as the other quality improvement system contains the elements of a QRIS.

7.4.1 Does your state/territory have a quality rating and improvement system?

☒ **Yes**, the state/territory has a QRIS operating statewide or territory-wide. Describe how the QRIS is administered (e.g., statewide or locally or through CCR&R entities) and any partners and provide a link, if available.

**Alabama's QRIS - Alabama Quality STARS is state administered and began operating statewide for center child care programs in March 2016. The website for Alabama Quality STARS is [www.alabamaqualitystars.org](http://www.alabamaqualitystars.org). The lead agency administers Alabama Quality STARS through a contract with the University of Alabama. The University assesses programs, recommends STAR ratings, and collects data on the implementation of the ORIS system.**

**In February 2018, the lead agency began the pilot of QRIS – Alabama Quality STARS for family child care providers. Currently, 44 family and group child care homes are**

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**participating in pilot evaluations. Full implementation of the FCC component of the system is scheduled for October 2018.**

- ☐ Yes, the state/territory has a QRIS initiative operating as a pilot-test in a few localities or only a few levels but does not have a fully operating initiative on a statewide or territory-wide basis. Provide a link, if available. [\[redacted\]](#)
- ☐ If Yes, describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. [\[redacted\]](#)
- ☐ No, but the state/territory is in the QRIS development phase.
- ☐ No, the state/territory has no plans for QRIS development.

#### 7.4.2 QRIS participation.

a) Are providers required to participate in the QRIS?

- ☒ Participation is voluntary.
- ☐ Participation is mandatory for providers serving children receiving a subsidy. If checked, describe the relationship between QRIS participation and subsidy (e.g., minimum rating required, reimbursed at higher rates for achieving higher ratings, participation at any level). \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Participation is required for all providers.

b) Which types of settings or distinctive approaches to early childhood education and care participate in the state/territory's QRIS? Check all that apply.

- ☒ Licensed child care centers
- ☐ Licensed family child care homes
- ☐ License-exempt providers
- ☒ Early Head Start programs
- ☒ Head Start programs
- ☐ State prekindergarten or preschool programs
- ☐ Local district-supported prekindergarten programs
- ☒ Programs serving infants and toddlers
- ☒ Programs serving school-age children
- ☐ Faith-based settings
- ☐ Tribally operated programs
- ☒ Other. Describe: **Programs that cannot be licensed by the lead agency but are regulated by a federal agency or another state agency can participate in the QRIS. Licensed faith-based settings can participate in the QRIS. Effective October 1, 2018 participation will expand to licensed family child care homes.**

#### 7.4.3 Support and assess the quality of child care providers.

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The Lead Agency may invest in the development, implementation, or enhancement of a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services. *Note:* If a Lead Agency decides to invest CCDF quality dollars in a QRIS, that agency can use the funding to assist in meeting consumer education requirements (98.33). If the Lead Agency has a QRIS, respond to questions 7.4.3 through 7.4.7.

Do the state/territory's quality improvement standards align with or have reciprocity with any of the following standards?

- ☒ No.
- ☐ Yes. If yes, check the type of alignment, if any, between the state/territory's quality standards and other standards. Check all that apply.
- ☐ Programs that meet state/territory preK standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between preK programs and the quality improvement system).
- ☐ Programs that meet federal Head Start Program Performance Standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between Head Start programs and the quality improvement system).
- ☐ Programs that meet national accreditation standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, an alternative pathway exists to meeting the standards).
- ☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ None.

7.4.4 Do the state/territory's quality standards build on its licensing requirements and other regulatory requirements?

- ☐ No.
- ☒ Yes. If yes, check any links between the state/territory's quality standards and licensing requirements.

**It is required that a provider meet basic licensing requirements to qualify for the base level of the QRIS.**

- ☐ Embeds licensing into the QRIS.
- ☐ State/territory license is a "rated" license.
- ☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Not linked.

7.4.5 Does the state/territory provide financial incentives and other supports designed to expand the full diversity of child care options and help child care providers improve the quality of services that are provided through the QRIS.

- ☐ No.
- ☐ Yes. If yes, check all that apply.
  - ☒ One time grants, awards, or bonuses

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- ☐ Ongoing or periodic quality stipends
  - ☒ Higher subsidy payments
  - ☒ Training or technical assistance related to QRIS
  - ☐ Coaching/mentoring
  - ☐ Scholarships, bonuses, or increased compensation for degrees/certificates
  - ☒ Materials and supplies
  - ☐ Priority access for other grants or programs
  - ☐ Tax credits (providers or parents)
  - ☐ Payment of fees (e.g., licensing, accreditation)
  - ☒ Other: **Annual bonuses are awarded at each QRIS – Alabama Quality STARS level.**
  - ☐ None

7.4.6 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

Once programs have achieved a quality rating, performance monitoring is completed each year to determine if the rating is being maintained. Measureable indicators of progress include, but not limited to, program activity and curriculum, accreditation, and post-secondary degree attainment. Other measures of progress include the increased participation of programs in the Alabama Quality STARS as well as programs that are attaining higher STAR levels.

## 7.5 Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers

Lead Agencies are encouraged to use the needs assessment to systematically review and improve the overall quality of care that infants and toddlers receive, the systems in place or needed to support and enhance the quality of infant and toddler providers, the capacity of the infant and toddler workforce to meet the unique needs of very young children, and the methods in place to increase the proportion of infants and toddlers in higher quality care.

Lead Agencies are required to spend 3 percent of their total CCDF expenditures on activities to improve the supply and quality of their infant and toddler care.

7.5.1 What activities are being implemented by the state/territory to improve the supply (see also section 4) and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers? Check all that apply and describe.

- ☐ Establishing or expanding high-quality community- or neighborhood-based family and child development centers. These centers can serve as resources to child care providers to improve the quality of early childhood services for infants and toddlers from low-income families and to improve eligible child care providers' capacity to offer high-quality, age-appropriate care to infants and toddlers from low-income families.  
Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- ☒ Establishing or expanding the operation of community- or neighborhood-based family child care networks. Describe:

**The Family Child Care Partnership Program (FCCP) is administered through a contract with Auburn University. The purpose of the FCCP project is to assist family child care providers to provide high quality child care services, with a focus on moving them toward national accreditation standards. By fulfilling this purpose, it is the vision of FCCP to ensure that family child care providers develop and apply their knowledge, and become aware of and utilize available supports, in ways that foster the healthy growth and development of the infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in their care. The FCCP supports providing is developing and maintaining statewide and local family child care associations.**

- ☒ Providing training and professional development to enhance child care providers' ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers. Describe:

**The lead agency contracts with eight non-profit community based agencies and one state university to provide training, technical assistance and professional development to child care providers. The agencies referred to as Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEA) service all 67 counties in Alabama. Each agency has a catchment area of 5 to 12 counties where services are provided. All training, technical assistance and professional development content must demonstrate the use of scientifically-based, developmentally appropriate and age appropriate strategies.**

- ☐ Providing coaching, mentoring, and/or technical assistance on this age group's unique needs from statewide or territory-wide networks of qualified infant-toddler specialists. Describe:

**The Alabama Infant Toddler Professional Development Network began as a support for programs participating in the Alabama Quality STARS pilot. It has been expanded to include support to infant toddler teachers in the Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership Program. The Infant Toddler Professional Development Network offers technical assistance, modeling, mentoring, and professional development support to infant toddler teachers. The programs develop a professional development plan with each teacher.**

- ☐ Coordinating with early intervention specialists who provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.). Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's QRIS, including classroom inventories and assessments. Describe:
- ☐ Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's child care licensing regulations. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

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- ☐ Developing infant and toddler components within the early learning and developmental guidelines. Describe:

**The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines includes developmental domains for children for infants and toddlers.**

- ☐ Improving the ability of parents to access transparent and easy-to-understand consumer information about high-quality infant and toddler care that includes information on infant and toddler language, social-emotional, and both early literacy and numeracy cognitive development. Describe:
- ☒ Carrying out other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of infant and toddler care provided within the state/territory and for which there is evidence that the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler health and safety, cognitive and physical development, and/or well-being. Describe:  
**The lead agency is an Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) Program grantee. The EHS-CCP program specifically targets infant/toddler classrooms and seeks to expand high quality early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers through partnerships between Head Start programs and child care, bringing the child care programs up to Head Start standards. The Program supports working families by providing a full-day, full-year program so that low-income children have the healthy and enriching early experiences they need to realize their full potential. The EHS-CCP program also provides comprehensive services that benefit children, families, and teachers, including: Health, developmental and behavioral screenings; higher health, safety and nutrition standards; increased professional development opportunities for teachers; increased parent engagement opportunities. The program is partnering with 20 centers and 50 family child care homes in 29 counties.**
- ☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

- 7.5.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

**The following performance measures are used to evaluate progress: Number of Participants and Programs reached by program quality initiatives; Number of technical assistance visits provided and type of provider setting receiving technical assistance visits; and Impact of professional development initiatives on quality indicators such as: Business and Management Skills, Child Development, Health and Safety, Inclusion, Ongoing Training to Meet Minimum Standards and Parent Involvement.**

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## 7.6 Child Care Resource and Referral

A Lead Agency may expend funds to establish or expand a statewide system of child care resource and referral services (98.53(a)(5)). It can be coordinated, to the extent determined appropriate by the Lead Agency, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based, or regionally based lead child care resource and referral organization (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii)). This effort may include activities done by local or regional child care and resource referral agencies, as discussed in section 1.7.

- 7.6.1 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The lead agency contracts with six non-profit community based agencies and one state university to provide child care resource and referral services. The agencies referred to as Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs) service all 67 counties in Alabama. Each agency has a catchment area of 5 to 12 counties where services are provided. The agencies meet quarterly with the lead agency to discuss shared goals, implementation strategies and collaborative activities with other agencies. There is not a statewide network.

## 7.7 Facilitating Compliance With State Standards

- 7.7.1 What strategies does your state/territory fund with CCDF quality funds to facilitate child care providers' compliance with state/territory requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety and with state/territory licensing standards? Describe:

The lead agency funds licensing inspectors who conduct annual monitoring of compliance of required health and safety, training, and licensing standards. Alabama Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs) provide training (including on-site), technical assistance and supports to providers to help them maintain and exceed licensing Minimum Standards.

- 7.7.2 Does the state/territory provide financial assistance to support child care providers in complying with minimum health and safety requirements?

☒ **No.**

☐ Yes. If yes, which types of providers can access this financial assistance?

- ☐ Licensed CCDF providers
- ☐ Licensed non-CCDF providers
- ☐ License-exempt CCDF providers
- ☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

- 7.7.3 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

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The lead agency evaluates progress by tracking the number of new programs participating in accreditation initiatives, the number of new programs achieving accreditation during the fiscal year, the number of accredited programs maintaining accreditation, and the number of programs making progress beyond the initial baseline assessment.

## **7.8 Evaluating and Assessing the Quality and Effectiveness of Child Care Programs and Services**

- 7.8.1 Describe how the state/territory measures the quality and effectiveness of child care programs and services currently being offered, including any tools used to measure child, family, teacher, classroom, or provider improvements, and how the state/territory evaluates how those tools positively impact children.

With the implementation of Alabama Quality STARS Quality Rating and Improvement System, the lead agency measures the number of low-income subsidy eligible children enrolled in Quality STAR rated programs. The lead agency measures the number of children enrolled in nationally accredited programs. Quality Enhancement Agencies offer basic training to child care programs on Environment Rating Scales and Administration Scale tools. The QEAs conduct training and review using the tools for programs participating in Alabama Quality STARS.

- 7.8.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the State/Territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The state will evaluate improvement in scores on the Environment Rating Scales and Administration Scales assessments. The lead agency will evaluate the movement of programs toward researched based curriculums. Using the data from the T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood Scholarship program, the Leadership in Child Care Scholarship program and the Alabama Pathways Professional Development registry, the lead agency will monitor professional development achievements of caregivers/teachers.

## **7.9 Accreditation Support**

- 7.9.1 Does the state/territory support child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of high quality?

☒ Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to child care centers and family child care homes to achieve accreditation.

**Quality Enhancement Agencies (QEAs) provide training, technical assistance, on-site coaching/mentoring to child care providers to achieve national accreditation. Supports are offered statewide for child care home providers through an agreement with Auburn University Family Child Care Partnerships Program. The initiative supports home providers working to achieve NAFCC (National Association for Family Child Care) accreditation. Accreditation supports are offered by other Quality Enhancement Agencies for child care**

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**centers working to achieve national accreditation such as NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and NAC (National Accreditation Commission) accreditation.**

- ☐ Yes, the state/territory has supports operating as a pilot-test or in a few localities but not statewide or territory-wide. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ No, but the state/territory is in the accreditation development phase.
- ☐ No, the state/territory has no plans for accreditation development.

7.9.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The lead agency will evaluate progress by tracking the number of new programs participating in accreditation initiatives, the number of new programs achieving accreditation during the fiscal year, the number of accredited programs maintaining accreditation, and the number of programs making progress beyond the initial baseline assessment.

#### **7.10 Program Standards**

7.10.1 How does the state/territory support state/territory or local efforts to develop or adopt high-quality program standards relating to:

- ☒ Health. Describe the supports:

**The lead agency has an agreement with the Alabama Department of Public Health to implement the Healthy Child Care Alabama initiative staffed with registered nurses to provide group and on-site training and technical assistance to home and center providers addressing the CCDF health and safety requirements and making necessary referrals.**

- ☒ Mental health. Describe the supports:

**The lead agency is collaborates with the state's Help Me Grow Alabama and Strengthening Family initiatives to increase the ability to link families with community resources and support family engagement.**

**The lead agency is a founding member of *First 5 Alabama!* The Alabama Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. The mission of *First 5 Alabama!* is to enhance healthy attachment relationships between children birth to age five and the adults who care for them through promotion, prevention, and intervention supports throughout Alabama's early childhood systems.**

- ☐ Nutrition. Describe the supports:
- ☐ Physical activity. Describe the supports:
- ☐ Physical development. Describe the supports: \_\_\_\_\_

7.10.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs

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and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The lead agency will evaluate the families', specifically Subsidy eligible families, access to these services. The lead agency will evaluate child care programs participating in Alabama Quality STARS based on standards that address health, nutrition and physical activity and development.

### **7.11 Other Quality Improvement Activities**

- 7.11.1 List and describe any other activities that the state/territory provides to improve the quality of child care services, which may include consumer and provider education activities, and describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The lead agency has developed the Infant - Toddler Professional Development Network to improve the professional practice of Alabama's infant-toddler caregivers/teachers. The Network's mission is to increase the educational level and skills of infant-toddler caregivers/teachers, support them in their programs through coaching and providing technical assistance for caregivers/teachers as they develop personalized professional development plans.

## **8 Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability**

Program integrity and accountability activities are integral to the effective administration of the CCDF program. Lead Agencies are required to describe in their Plan effective internal controls that ensure integrity and accountability while maintaining the continuity of services (98.16(cc)). These accountability measures should address reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, including program violations and administrative errors.

This section includes topics on internal controls to ensure integrity and accountability and processes in place to investigate and recover fraudulent payments and to impose sanctions on clients or providers in response to fraud.

### **8.1 Internal Controls and Accountability Measures To Help Ensure Program Integrity**

- 8.1.1 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that all its staff members and any staff members in other agencies who administer the CCDF program are informed and trained regarding program requirements and integrity. Check all that apply.

- ☒ Issue policy manual
- ☒ Issue policy change notices
- ☒ Staff training. Describe:

**Policy training is conducted for lead agency staff and contract staff on an annual basis with more frequent trainings conducted at request or as deemed necessary by the lead agency.**

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☒ Ongoing monitoring and assessment of policy implementation. Describe:  
**Lead agency staff conducts on-site compliance visits as well as on-site technical assistance visits to ensure that eligibility staff are informed and trained in new policy.**

☒ Other. Describe:

**The Lead Agency conducts quarterly director's meetings to discuss any updates and/or issues that need to be implemented into the actions of the staff members of the Child Care Management Agencies.**

- 8.1.2 Lead Agencies must ensure the integrity of the use of funds through sound fiscal management and must ensure that financial practices follow generally accepted accounting principles (98.68 (a)(1)). Describe the processes in place for the Lead Agency to ensure sound fiscal management practices for all expenditures of CCDF funds, including the following:

☒ Verifying and processing billing records to ensure timely payments to providers.

Describe:

**Providers do not submit a bill for services. Parents record attendance using a swipe card. The attendance for the week is captured in the Time and Attendance System database and payment is calculated based on the child's authorization information. Direct Deposits are made to the child care provider's bank account within 21 days of the week child care services were provided.**

☒ Fiscal oversight of grants and contracts. Describe:

**Program monitoring by Lead Agency staff is conducted on a random sample of records from each CMA agency to ensure proper application of program policies. During the monitoring visits, case records and provider records are randomly selected and reviewed for compliance with subsidy policy and procedures.**

**The lead agency**

☒ Tracking systems to ensure reasonable and allowable costs. Describe:

**The lead agency conducts a Market Rate Survey to determine the rates charged per child in all child care settings in Alabama. This rate information is used to determine the reimbursement rate for providers who participate in DHR's Child Care Subsidy.**

☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

- 8.1.3 Check and describe the processes that the Lead Agency will use to identify risk in their CCDF program. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

☐ Conduct a risk assessment of policies and procedures. Describe:  

☒ Establish checks and balances to ensure program integrity. Describe:  

☒ Use supervisory reviews to ensure accuracy in eligibility determination. Describe:

**The Child Care Management Agencies are contractually obligated to perform supervisory reviews of client cases, including administrative reviews for client accusations of misuse of policy.**

☒ Other. Describe:

**Lead agency staff conducts on-site compliance visits as well as on-site technical assistance visits ensure that eligibility staff are informed and trained in new policy.**

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- 8.1.4 Lead Agencies are required to have processes in place to identify fraud and other program violations to ensure program integrity. Program violations can include intentional and unintentional client and/or provider violations, as defined by the Lead Agency. Administrative errors refer to areas identified through the error-rate review process. Check and describe any activities that the Lead Agency conducts to ensure program integrity.
- a) Check which activities that the Lead Agency has chosen to conduct to identify unintentional or intentional program violations.
- ☒ Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)).
  - ☒ Run system reports that flag errors (include types). Describe:  
**The Department's Child Care Management System (CCMS) and Time and Attendance System (TAS) generate monthly and weekly administrative reports. CCMS allows state staff to view eligibility determinations made by local agencies. The system has audit trail capability to track changes made to a specific case, the specific user who made the change and what changes were made. Demographic information and licensing status are entered only by licensing staff which prevents the creation of provider records for centers that are not legally operating and prevents continued payment to programs no longer legally operating. The Department can also create ad hoc reports when needed for special circumstances.**
  - ☒ Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records.
  - ☒ Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.
  - ☒ Audit provider records.
  - ☒ Train staff on policy and/or audits.
  - ☐ Other. Describe:
- b) Check which activities the Lead Agency has chosen to conduct to identify administrative errors.
- ☒ Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, CACFP, FNS, Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, PARIS).
  - ☒ Run system reports that flag errors (include types). Describe:  
**The Department's Child Care Management System (CCMS) and Time and Attendance System (TAS) generate monthly and weekly administrative reports. CCMS allows state staff to view eligibility determinations made by local agencies. The system has audit trail capability to track changes made to a specific case, the specific user who made the change and what changes were made. Demographic information and licensing status are entered only by licensing staff which prevents the creation of provider records for centers that are not legally operating and prevents continued payment to programs no longer legally**
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operating. The Department can also create ad hoc reports when needed for special circumstances.

Management reports within TAS include: *Adjustment Summary Report* of all adjustment to payments (credit or debit), the user who completed the adjustment and the date; *New Provider Report and Inactive Provider Report* - detail providers new to the system and providers no longer participating so that appropriate actions can be taken with the children enrolled or seeking to enroll with the provider. *Underutilization Report*- indicates children who are not attending at the authorized level, contact can be made to determine if services are still needed or a change in level of services is needed.

- ☒ Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records.
- ☒ Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.
- ☒ Audit provider records.
- ☒ Train staff on policy and/or audits.
- ☐ Other. Describe:

8.1.5 The Lead Agency is required to identify and recover misspent funds as a result of fraud, and it has the option to recover any misspent funds as a result of errors. Check and describe any activities that the Lead Agency uses to investigate and recover improper payments due to program violations or administrative errors, as defined by your state/territory.

a) Check activities that the Lead Agency uses to investigate and recover improper payments due to intentional program violations or fraud. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

☒ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe:

**Amounts of \$35.00 or more are to be recovered.**

- ☒ Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).
- ☒ Recover through repayment plans.
- ☒ Reduce payments in subsequent months.
- ☐ Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.
- ☐ Recover through other means.
- ☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit below.
- ☐ Other. Describe:

b) Describe the results of the Lead Agency activities regarding the investigation and recovery of fraud or intentional program violations.

**Investigations are completed and if the program violation is legitimate, the lead agency may prosecute the client for fraud. This occurs at dollar amounts over \$2500.00.**

c) Check any activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to unintentional program violations. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

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☒ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe:

**Amounts of \$35.00 or more are to be recovered.**

- ☐ Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).
- ☒ Recover through repayment plans.
- ☒ Reduce payments in subsequent months.
- ☐ Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.
- ☐ Recover through other means.
- ☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

d) Check any activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to administrative errors.

☒ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe:

**Amounts of \$35.00 or more are to be recovered.**

- ☐ Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agency(ies) (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).
- ☒ Recover through repayment plans.
- ☒ Reduce payments in subsequent months.
- ☐ Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.
- ☐ Recover through other means.
- ☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit below.
- ☐ Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

8.1.6 What type of sanction will the Lead Agency place on clients and providers to help reduce improper payments due to program violations?

☒ Disqualify the client. If checked, describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for clients who are disqualified.

**Parents and providers who commit intentional program violations are sanctioned for three (3) months for the first offense, six (6) months for the second offense and one year for the third and any subsequent offenses. Sanctions means the parent or provider cannot participate in the program during the sanctioned period. Clients have the right to request an administrative review or an administrative hearing, within 60 days in response to any action taken to deny, reduce, or terminate services, if the client feels such action was taken outside the context of Program Policy.**

☒ Disqualify the provider. If checked, describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for providers who are disqualified.

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**Providers who commit intentional program violations are sanctioned for three (3) months for the first offense, six (6) months for the second offense and one year for the third and any subsequent offenses. Sanctions means the provider cannot participate in the program during the sanctioned period. A child care provider has the right to request a fair hearing in response to any action to deny or terminate Program participation.**

☒ Prosecute criminally.

☐ Other. Describe: